



NORWEGIAN
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Norwegians, the peaceful Vikings?

A qualitative study of Norwegian cultural identity through the mediated picture created in the “to Valhall” debate

Kraig Joseph Hein

Supervisor:

Professor of Religious Studies Liv Ingeborg Lied

This Master's Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MA degree at

MF Norwegian School of Theology, spring 2014.

AVH5035: Master's Thesis (60 ECTS)

Master in Religion, Society and Global Issues

41,350 words

Preface - Inspiration for Thesis

When considering themes to focus on in my master's thesis I knew that I wanted to research a topic that focused on Norway and more specifically religion in the Norwegian military. I came across the document *Religiøst mangfold og militær enhet* (2009) that was published by the Feltprosts teologiske fagråd. I was planning on conducting an analysis of this document. I was given the name of Geir Johannes Barlaup by my advisor so that I could ask him questions concerning this topic. Barlaup is writing his PhD at Misjonshøgskolen on the topic of Norwegian soldiers' conception of religion. I sent him an email asking about this document and if he had any topics or themes that I could look into. At the end of the email he mentioned an article from the magazine *Alfa* and the battle cry of "to Valhall" by Norwegian soldiers.

I looked into this article and the media debate that stemmed from it. Norway's involvement in Afghanistan and the Telemark Battalion were topics that I knew little about, but I was intrigued by them and wanted to learn more. I decided to shift my focus to the actions of these soldiers and the reactions that followed them for the next two years in the media. As I read more and gained deeper background knowledge, I found that it was exactly the type of study that I wanted to conduct.

Acknowledgements

I would like to start out by thanking MF Norwegian School of Theology for providing me with a stimulating and exciting academic environment. This was a crucial component in the completion of this thesis. I have learned invaluable lessons and gained a great deal of knowledge from all the instructors, guest lecturers, and my fellow classmates, who compose the Religion, Society and Global Issues Master's Program.

Next, I would like to thank my supervisor Liv Ingeborg Lied. Thank you for all your insight, suggestions, and knowledge, as well as for helping me to continually take my work to the next level throughout this process.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife. Thank you for always supporting and encouraging me. I appreciated all the proofreading that you have done and for patiently listening to my many ideas.

1. Introduction	7
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Research Question	9
1.3 Methods and Materials	9
1.3.1 Qualitative Document Analysis	10
1.3.2 Finding my Source Material	11
1.3.3 Other Materials	15
1.3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of my Research	16
1.3.5 Personal background, motivation and worldview	18
1.4 Context of Media Debate: 2010-2011	19
1.4.1 Norwegian Armed Forces and The War in Afghanistan	19
1.4.2 Telemark Battalion	21
1.4.3 Alfa Article	22
1.4.4 Norse mythology	23
1.5 The structure of the thesis	24
2. Theoretical Perspectives	26
2.1 Media and Society	26
2.2 Norwegian Cultural Identity	28
2.2.1 Cultural Memory	31
2.3 Peacefulness	32
2.4 Kulturarv	37
2.4.1 Rural Cultural Heritage	38
2.4.2 Christian Cultural Heritage	40
2.4.3 Vicarious Religion	43
2.5 Concluding Remarks	47

3. Warrior Culture	49
3.1 Media Coverage of Warrior Culture	49
3.1.1 Warrior Culture: 2008-2009	50
3.1.2 Media Coverage of Warrior Culture: 2010-2011	51
3.2 Uses of Warrior Culture	57
3.3 The “American Other”	60
3.3.1 Media Coverage of the “American Other”	61
3.3.2 Portrayals of American and Norwegian soldiers	64
3.4 Concluding Remarks	66
4. Norse mythology and Viking symbolism	68
4.1 “To Valhall”	68
4.2 Media Coverage of Norse Mythology and Viking Symbolism	69
4.3 Thematic Analysis	74
4.3.1 Dealing with Death	74
4.3.2 Motivation	76
4.3.3 Company Identity	77
4.3.4 “Odin meg her og Odin meg der”	78
4.4 Concluding Remarks	80
5. Discussion	81
5.1 Norwegian Peacefulness	81
5.1.1 Role of Norwegian soldiers	81
5.1.2 Motivation	89
5.1.3 Macho Attitudes	92
5.1.4 Norway as Exceptionally Peaceful	95
5.2 Norwegian Christian Cultural Heritage	97

5.2.1 Norwegian Values	98
5.2.2 The role of military chaplains	103
5.3 Concluding Remarks	105
6. Conclusion	106
6.1 Summary	106
6.2 Reflections and Outlook	107
6.3 Concluding Remarks	109
7. References	110
8. Appendices	121
8.1 Appendix A	121
8.2 Appendix B	122
8.3 Appendix C	122
8.4 Appendix D	123
8.5 Appendix E	124

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In the fall of 2010 central components of the Norwegian self-image were shaken. The media was reporting that Norwegian soldiers in Afghanistan were claiming that war is better than sex and that they screamed cries of “to Valhall” before they went into battle. These soldiers were from the Telemark Battalion, one of the premier divisions in the Norwegian Armed Forces. Military and political leaders were concerned by these references to Norse mythology and the emergence of an alleged warrior culture in parts of the Norwegian military. The media coverage of these controversial events, would last for two years. This long time period allowed for varied opinions to be expressed and many strong reactions to emerge. The media attention could be found both regionally and nationally, and throughout the wide spectrum of media channels. Contributors to this media debate would include politicians, high ranking military officials, newspaper commentators, military chaplains and the soldiers themselves. Due to the the battle cry being used as a key signaling phrase, I will refer to this mediated debate as the “to Valhall” debate.

In this thesis I will be analyzing these events and want to find out what the portrayals and reactions to them show about Norwegian society and most specifically components of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity. I will *not* be looking at these events through a firsthand account provided by, for example, the soldiers who carried out these actions. I will instead be studying these events and the reactions to them through the mediated picture presented by the Norwegian press. This gives me with the opportunity to look at these events from a different angle and perspective. I will hopefully also be able to observe the *relationship* between society and the media. Specifically the role that this relationship plays in displaying, reflecting, and producing components a Norwegian cultural identity.

I will begin by presenting and analyzing the mediated picture of events through descriptive examples, found in the newspaper articles that make up the press coverage of the “to Valhall” debate. Through an examination of this mediated picture I look to answer one main question. What components of a Norwegian cultural identity can be observed through a qualitative

document analysis of the newspaper articles that were a part of the “to Valhall” debate from 2010-2011?

I found three main inciting events, which can be viewed as catalysts in this debate. I consider these events a starting point for the media coverage that is the focus of this thesis. These three events also contain many of the themes that are woven throughout the entire “to Valhall” debate.

The first event was the death of a Norwegian soldier in Afghanistan on January 25, 2010. His name was Claes Joachim “Jokke” Olssen and he was a member of the Telemark Battalion’s Mechanized Infantry Company 4 (Mek 4). He was killed when the CV9030 infantry fighting vehicle that he was in, drove over an improvised explosive device (IED), more commonly known as a roadside bomb (Hustadnes, 2010). After Olssen’s death there was an increase in media coverage concerning the actions of the Norwegian soldiers in Afghanistan. Many of these actions were perceived as controversial. The main controversy revolved around the use of battle cries with Norse mythology themes, Viking symbolism, and the use of the Punisher skull as an unofficial company symbol. All of these actions were described as being a part of a warrior culture that had allegedly arisen in parts of the Norwegian military, specifically in Olssen’s Mek 4 company of the Telemark Battalion.

The second inciting event was the magazine article *Norway in War* (Rønningen, 2010), which contained interviews with soldiers from the Telemark Battalion who were deployed to Afghanistan. This article described the conditions in Afghanistan, combat stories, and controversial quotes from the soldiers. It garnered reactions from politicians, military leadership, and media commentators. An example of one of these quotes that is often mentioned is “-better than sex”, referring to combat as being better than sex (Rønningen, 2010, p. 112).¹ The article was in the first issue of a new men’s magazine entitled *Alfa*, which

¹ There are several different ways in which the idea of war being better than sex was written or expressed in different articles. In the Alfa article *Norway in War* the headline “- bedre enn sex” is in large letters at the top of a page. There was also the quote “Det å være i kamp er verdt de tre månedene uten puling. Det høres kanskje teit ut, men det er bedre enn å knulle”. (Rønningen, 2010). One of the other main places were a very similar quote comes up is from the front page of VG from September 8, 2010. This quote read “Krige er bedre en sex”, which means that fighting in war or being in combat is better than sex. I also found in (Weihe & Smith-Solbakken, 2010) where it says “krigen er bedre enn sex”. Even if worded differently, all of these quotes show soldiers comparing what they experience in war with sex.

came out in October 2010. It was a men's magazine that focused on themes of sex, masculinity, and violence.

The third event was the release of a video on Dagbladet's website.² The video shows Norwegian soldiers joining together in a battle cry, that goes: "You are predators, the Taliban is the prey. To Valhall! Orrah! To Valhall! Orrah! To Valhall! Orrah!". The soldiers are seen in uniform yelling this battle cry in unison with machine guns thrust into the air. This is the same battle cry that was mentioned above regarding the death of Olssen. This visual presentation of the battle cry received strong reactions from news sources as well as Norwegian civil society.

1.2 Research Question

My research question for this thesis is:

- How does the mediated picture of events from 2010-2011 concerning actions carried out by members of the Telemark Battalion portray aspects of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity?

I also have two sub-questions that will be explored:

- How does this mediated picture reflect and create aspects of peacefulness as a component of Norwegian cultural identity?
- How does this mediated picture reflect and create aspects of Christian cultural heritage as a component of Norwegian cultural identity?

1.3 Methods and Materials

In this section I will describe my method of analysis as well as my source materials. I will begin with describing the method of qualitative document analysis. This will be followed by a description of how I found the newspaper articles that would make up my source material. Then I give a description of the other sources that were vital in gaining a better understanding of the context that these events are set in. I end with strengths and weaknesses of my research, as well as background information about myself as the researcher.

² This same video was also be found on YouTube.

1.3.1 Qualitative Document Analysis

The main method of analysis that I was inspired by was qualitative content analysis (Bryman, 2012). More specifically qualitative document analysis, due to my source material consisting of newspaper articles. The media scholar David Altheide and sociologist Christopher Schneider describe document analysis as “an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure, and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving, and analyzing documents for their relevance, significance, and meaning” (Altheide & Schnedier, 2013, p. 5). This type of analysis provided me with the data that I needed to answer my research question. It also was a method that made it possible for me to study the relationship between media and society.

The type of qualitative document analysis that I used is *ethnographic content analysis* (ECA), as it is outlined by Altheide and Schneider (2013). ECA is described as “movement back and forth between conceptualization, data collection, analysis, and interpretation” (Bryman, 2012, p. 559). In this type of analysis the investigator is central in determining the direction of the data collection. A rigid protocol is not used to guide the research.

Two of the benefits of ECA are that it is systematic and analytical. It is a process of constant discovery where data collection and interpretation are reflexive and nonlinear (Altheide & Schnedier, 2013). It is due to the flexibility of ECA that I chose to use it for my research. The nature of this method, which focuses on constant discovery, is a beneficial way of finding themes and grouping ideas as they emerge. As I conducted my research I strived to be systematic in my data collection and keep a thematic focus.

In my research question I state that I am looking to analyze a mediated picture of events. I chose to use qualitative document analysis and ECA because they gave me the freedom to look at themes and ideas that emerge after I have read through the articles several times concerning this mediated picture. Through the process of reading and rereading my source material I started to establish the themes and ideas that would eventually become a part of my analysis. Many of these themes changed throughout the process of reading and rereading. Examples of these early themes are warrior culture, the American military, military chaplain

response, Viking symbolism and Norse mythology. Using these themes as a guide I started to find descriptive examples as well as find sub-themes (Athleide & Schneider, 2013). These descriptive examples are what I used to compose my analysis, which can be found in chapters three and four.

1.3.2 Finding my Source Material

The references to the actions of these Telemark Battalion soldiers could be found in all forms of media. Due to space constraints and the desire to keep a narrow enough scope, I restricted my source material to newspaper articles. These newspaper articles were found in Norwegian language news sources and from the time period of 2010-2011. I used newspaper articles that appeared in print, with the exception of a couple of articles that were published on VG Nett. I included these articles because I felt they provided added insight to the themes that I found in the articles that appeared in print. After starting the process of article collection I located a number of articles from 2008-2009 that I felt gave important background information on the coverage of events that would occur in the two years that followed. These articles were not used directly in the analysis but are mentioned to provide extra background information and context.

I used purposive sampling, and more specifically contingent sampling, to select my source materials. This means that I strategically found articles that were relevant to my research question. They were not selected on a random basis. This method of sampling provided me with the flexibility that I desired in my research. It also allowed me to change the criteria that I used in the selection of articles that would be used as source material (Bryman, 2010, p. 418). This follows ECA strategy, which focuses on flexibility and constant discovery.

One of the main reasons that I decided to use newspaper articles as my source material is the fact that newspapers hold an important place in Norwegian society. In the 1990's, 9 out of 10 Norwegians read one or more paper editions of newspapers daily. In 2008 this number had only gone down to 8 out of 10 (Lundby, 2010). There are also a large number of newspapers that are printed in Norway in comparison to the small population.³ According to

³ The population of Norway was 5,109,056 as of January 1, 2014 ("Population, 1 January 2014", 2014)

medienorge.uib.no there were 227 newspapers printed in 2012 (“Antall aviser etter type - resultat”, n.d.). Due to the easy and widespread access to the internet that is found in Norway there are also large numbers of people that read the online editions of the paper newspapers. The two most popular examples of these being VG and Dagbladet (Lundby, 2010). These statistics demonstrate the influential role that the press has in Norwegian society.

Newspapers are also one of the main mediums where societal debate takes place. Døving and Kraft state that “the press is an arena for many voices in Norwegian debates”⁴ as well as being “a broad discursive arena for public statements”⁵ (Døving & Kraft, 2013). Gripsrud says that the media “provide a forum for public debate and the formation of opinions (Gripsrud, 2002, p. 59). Newspapers allow people from different segments of society to come together in one place and discuss issues and events that are perceived as important and newsworthy.

The type of newspaper that an article is printed in can determine a great deal concerning the themes that are written about and the political leanings of an article. Below I set the newspapers, from which my source materials came from, in broad categories to give a general idea of what kind of newspaper they are.

- **Conservative National:** Aftenposten, Dagsavisen, Nationen
- **Radical National:** Klassekampen, Morgenbladet
- **Christian:** Vårt Land and DagensMagazinet
- **Regional:** Telemarksavisa, Agderposten, Stavanger Aftenblad, Bergens Tidende, Glåmdalen
- **Tabloid National:** Verdens Gang (VG), Dagbladet
- **Special Interest:** Norges Forsvar, Forsvarets Forum, Ukeavisen Ledelse

* Norsk Telegrambyrå (NTB): Norway’s largest distributor of editorial content including text, images and moving images. It has been around for 145 years and is owned jointly by the Norwegian media (“About NTB”, n.d.).

⁴ “pressen er en arena for mange stemmer i norsk debatt”

⁵ “en bred diskursiv arean for offentlige uttalelser”

To locate and collect the articles that would make up my source material I used the online archive Atekst.⁶ This archive has a search function that allows you to search for specific words or phrases that occurred in print in Norwegian newspapers and media. The main search phrase that I used as a starting point was: “til Valhall”. I used this phrase because it had been mentioned in the email that I received from Geir Johannes Barlaup. It included the aspects of religion through the reference to “Valhall” and the warrior culture, because it was a part of the battle cry used by the Telemark Battalion soldiers. The initial time frame that I looked at concerning “til Valhall” results was 2010-2013. I started with 2010 because that is when the article from Alfa was written.

There were a number of other words and phrases that I searched for in Atekst in the initial stages. I did this to see what other results I would find. Some examples of these search words were: *krigerkultur*, *Telemark bataljon*, *Wenneberg*, and *Norrøne mytologi*.⁷ I found that as I conducted these Atekst searches I was getting a lot of repeats of the same articles that came up when searching for “til Valhall”. Due to this discovery I decided to only use the articles that I found using the “til Valhall” search. I believed that this would provide me with the source material that I was looking for. Focusing on the search results for just one term helped me to keep a manageable number of articles for my analysis. The fact that the term “to Valhall” was prevalent in most of the articles that made up this media debate shows that it was a central dimension of the discourse that drove this debate.

As I started to read through the articles I found that there were many references to the death of a Norwegian soldier in Afghanistan. I found the first article which mentioned this death. I used it as a starting point of the time period that my source materials would come from. This article, which contained the first references to Jocke’s death was from January 29, 2010 and was in *Dagbladet* (Hustadnes, 2010). After I had this starting point of January 2010, I read through the “til Valhall” Atekst search results and I looked for any article that made reference to Jocke, Afghanistan, a warrior culture, and the Telemark Battalion. These terms are the

⁶ Atekst is Scandinavia’s largest digital news archive. Can be used to search Norwegian print publications. It contains over 300 million searchable articles and the archive goes back to 1945. (“Atekst”, n.d).

⁷ Warrior culture, Telemark Battalion, Wenneberg, and Norse mythology.

themes that I used in the initial collection of newspaper articles. I had to filter out results that referred to completely different stories. For example stories about an archeological museum exhibit containing Viking weapons and the Valhall sports arena in Oslo. This sorting was done by reading the headlines or quickly skimming the article if needed. I found that this was a large number of articles and that I needed to narrow down the number of articles that I would use in my analysis.

With a starting point based on an article describing Olsson's death and the years with the highest number of hits for "til Valhall" on Atekst, I decided to restrict my time period to 2010-2011.⁸ It was also the time period where I found the most relevant articles that contained my initial themes. The articles from 2012-2013 mentioned many of the same events, but it was often just a short reference or example that did not take this debate further or build up new ideas. The number of hits was also much lower than 2010-2011. The restriction to articles from 2010-2011 helped me keep a narrow enough scope and maintain a manageable number of source materials.

After I had found the articles that fit my parameters I saved a copy of them to my computer and printed out a hard copy. I did this so that I could make notes and write out the themes that I found as I read through the source material. I organized the hard copies chronologically in a binder. This first group of articles that fit my original parameters consisted of 71 articles. I read through these articles in their entirety to familiarize myself with the debate. As I read I wrote notes concerning my first impressions of these articles. Besides containing my first impressions, these notes also focused on themes, important people, and reactions that I felt were important. Through this initial read I started to develop the themes and keywords that would guide my data collection and analysis. I also was able to narrow down the number of articles that I would be using for my analysis. I removed articles that I found to be repetitive or were just a reprint of a story from a larger news source. This narrowed it down to a group of 53 articles, which became the source material that was used in my analysis. It was from

⁸ Atekst results for "til Valhall" search from 2010-2013:
2010: 125 hits
2011: 152 hits
2012: 85 hits
2013: 58 hits

these 53 articles that I gathered the descriptive examples that are shown in my analyses chapters (chapters 3 and 4).⁹ It was through the grouping of these descriptive examples that I created the thematic analyses which can be seen in section concerning the “American Other” (3.3) and the thematic analysis of Norse mythology and Viking symbolism (4.3).

1.3.3 Other Materials

There were other media sources that I looked at through out my research to help me get gain background and context information. I looked at the magazine article *Norway in War* from the October 2010 issue of Alfa. This article was one of the inciting incidents that helped start the media coverage of these events. It was important to look at this article to get a better understanding of the references that were being made in various articles.¹⁰

I also watched videos found online through Youtube, Dagbladet, and NRK to get a better understanding of the battle cries that are mentioned.¹¹ This cry of “to Valhall” is portrayed in these videos and I therefore watched them to get a better understanding of the references that are made.

There are two other media sources that I looked into to help me gain a better understanding of the events that are described. The first was the NRK documentary that was shown on Norwegian television in 2011 entitled *Norway in War: Operation Afghanistan*. I watched this documentary, which consisted of six parts, with the first episode airing in April 2011. I did not analyze this documentary as part of my research but it did provide information that was helpful in getting a better contextual understanding of events that are mentioned in the newspaper articles. The second media source was the book *Brødre i Blodet* (Brothers in Blood) by Emil Johansen. This book was mentioned in various articles from 2011. This book provided helpful background information on both the Telemark Battalion and actions carried out by its members that are mentioned in my source material. It also gave a soldiers perception on these actions and the setting that they took place in.

⁹ These descriptive examples are shown in chapters 3 and 4 in the sub-headings labeled “Media Coverage”.

¹⁰ This article is described in-depth in chapter 1.4.3.

¹¹ NRK stands for *Norsk rikskringkasting* or Norwegian Broadcasting Cooperation, which broadcasts both television and radio channels.

1.3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of my Research

There were a number of decisions that I made in my research design, as well as the way that I conducted myself as a researcher, that I view as strengths. On the other hand there were other decisions that can be viewed as weakness. Here I will provide examples of both.

The systematic and thematically approach that I took in finding the articles that would be used as my source material, was something I view as one of my greatest strengths. I used a great deal of time on finding the articles that I would include. I read through all of the articles from my Ateskt search that met my initial criteria. I took great care in using the codes and themes that I had developed to narrow down this collection of articles to a manageable number.

Qualitative research is often criticized for its lack of transparency (Bryman, 2012). In an attempt to be as transparent as possible I provide the original Norwegian text in footnotes for all instances where I have personally translated quotes from newspaper articles that were in Norwegian. The same is true for any quote from books or journal articles. This makes it easier for anyone to check my translations and make sure that I was not manipulating them to fit an agenda.

The time that I spent on familiarizing myself with background information concerning this topic was also an aspect that I believe strengthened my research and thesis as a whole. I read numerous sources concerning a wide range of topics. These topics included the war in Afghanistan, Norwegian involvement in Afghanistan, books that were referenced to in the source material, documentaries made about the war, and a number of other articles that gave me varied perspectives. I also read a couple of books that were written about soldiers and their experiences in war.¹² All of these sources made it easier for me understand the connections and references that were made by contributors to the “to Valhall” debate concerning varied people, places, and events.

¹² Two examples of these are: Gray, J. G. (1998) *The Warriors: Reflections of men in battle*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press. & Junger, S. (2010) *War*. New York, NY: Twelve.

The fact that I did not live in Norway at the time of this media coverage means that I am in a way an outside observer. Before starting this research I had very limited outside knowledge of these events. I did not have opinions concerning these actions or the types of reactions that came from them. This helped me enter this research with a more open mind. The idea of me being an outsider observer is also due to the fact that I am an American conducting an analysis of Norwegian cultural identity.

With qualitative document analysis there is a great deal of room for flexibility. This has a number of benefits as well as disadvantages. One is provided with the possibility of taking new directions as they arise during the research process. A disadvantage is that there can be issues with *external reliability*. It is very difficult or even impossible for my exact study to be replicated by another person. The procedures that I used as I read through articles, organized, created themes, and made connections was a process that was very specific to me as a researcher (Bryman, 2012).

All of the articles that make up this mediated debate were written in Norwegian and published in Norwegian newspapers. Norwegian is my second language, which means that there is a possibility that I have put more emphasis on or overlooked certain terms or main ideas in a text, compared to a person who has Norwegian as their mother tongue. This can be looked at as both a strength and a weakness in this type of research. It opens up the possibility for new ideas to emerge as well as makes it possible for other ones to be missed altogether.

The importance that I set on certain themes may vary greatly from if another person was to conduct the same study. The process of how this theme selection and formation occurs was difficult to document. It was a process that occurred mainly in my head and I did not always remember to document what I was thinking at the time. I believe that I could have provided a more comprehensive description of these processes. The method of selecting source material that I used is also quite subjective, which means that there could be a large degree of variation. The combination of these two things means that many aspects of this research are

based on the researchers decision at the time and subjectivity. This leads to a personalized research that is hard to replicate.

1.3.5 Personal background, motivation and worldview

Whenever research is done that involves the analysis of texts it is important to remember that there are certain preconditions and presuppositions that all people have when they are trying to understand and interpret texts. Jostein Gripsrud describes this using the term *horizon of understanding*, which he borrowed from Hans-Georg Gadamer. He says that this includes all the “experiences, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, unconscious desires and disgusts” that people take in with them during the act of reading (Gripsrud, 2002, p. 131). In my case there are several aspects concerning my horizon of understanding that will provide some perspective on my worldview and how this may have had an impact on how I conducted the research that is found in this thesis.

To start with, I am an American and this is a part of my personal identity that influences many aspects of my worldview. One aspect of being an American is my view of the military. This is important due to the central focus that the military has in the “to Valhall” debate. As a person that was born and has lived most of my life in the United States I have a view of how the military fits into society in a way that most likely differs from many Norwegians. This view consists of the role that I see the military having in an international and domestic context. This includes the way that soldiers are “supposed” to act as well as the way that society and the government treats soldiers that have served their country. Another aspect of my American identity is the role that I see religion playing in the public sphere concerning societal issues or debates. From an American perspective the separation of church and state is one of the key ideas that has had an influence on my view of the relationship between religion and the government. The idea of civil religion (Bellah, 1967) and the role that it plays in American society has also had an impact concerning my views on religion in the public sphere and the role that it plays in cultural identity formation.

Coming from my primarily American context, I have now lived in a Norway for approximately 3 years. I have become familiar with different cultural and societal aspects of

Norwegian life. I am married to a Norwegian and I have actively immersed myself in Norwegian culture and have a thorough understanding of many Norwegian norms. This means that I conduct my research as an American that has a good understanding of Norwegian culture and society. I look at the actions that are described in these newspaper articles through my American worldview, but at the same time have a well informed understanding of the context that they were occurring in.

From a personal standpoint this research is interesting to me because it deals with the environment that I find myself living in. It is an environment that is new to me in many ways. In the short time that I have lived in Norway I have strived to learn as much about Norwegian society as I can. This thesis is an opportunity for me to looking at these themes in a new way. I also believe that I have the potential of providing new insights on a number of these themes due to my primarily American worldview in a Norwegian context.

1.4 Context of Media Debate: 2010-2011

In this section I will be providing background information that I feel is vital when it comes to understanding the actions and events of these soldiers as they are described in these newspaper articles. Members of the Norwegian Armed Forces were the central focus of this debate. Therefore I will give a description and information concerning Norway's military and its mission in Afghanistan. I will also provide information concerning the Telemark Battalion, which is the unit that the soldiers mentioned in this debate come from. The Alfa magazine article is one of the main ignitors of this media debate, so I will be providing background information on this publication and the specific edition that this article was printed in. Many of the controversial battle cries and symbol use that is referred to includes aspects Norse mythology and I will therefore provide information on the specific references that were made.

1.4.1 Norwegian Armed Forces and The War in Afghanistan

The Norwegian Armed Forces is divided into four branches: Army, Navy, Air Force and the Home Guard. The peacetime strength is approximately 23,000 and after mobilization approximately 83,000.¹³ The identity of the Armed Forces has its foundations as a conscript

¹³ These figures include all the officers, civilian employees and conscripts.

military with the responsibility of national defense. In more recent times it has also taken on certain obligations that come with the international commitments that Norway has due to its political alliances (“Facts and Figures”, 2013). One of the main political and military alliance being NATO. The Norwegian Armed Forces is small in international terms, but partakes in various operations around the world due to this membership in NATO.

One of the most important and visible missions that the Norwegian Armed Forces has had in recent years is Afghanistan. According to the Norwegian Armed Forces website, their main mission in Afghanistan is “making the Afghan security forces capable of self-managing the security in their country”¹⁴ (“Oppdraget til de norske styrkene”, 2012). They do this through sending military personnel, economic aid to the civil and military sectors, and sending advisors in a variety of areas. The military personnel are part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). This force was created by NATO to “conduct operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). They help facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population” (“About ISAF: Mission”, n.d.).¹⁵ Norway’s troops have been a part of ISAF since December 2002. Norway works in Regional Command for Northern Afghanistan with 17 officers. Their main responsibility is follow-up and guidance for the Afghan security forces that took over the security responsibility in 2012 (“Oppdraget til de norske styrkene”, 2012).

There are other tasks that the Norwegian Armed Forces are assigned to in Afghanistan. The civilian and military operations of the Kabul International Airport is an example of one of these tasks. They also work in intelligence gathering, which is used to support Norwegian troops and their ISAF and Afghan partners. Norway also works within the United Nation’s system and their programs in Afghanistan. One of these programs is the United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan (UNAMA). This program, which Norwegian UN personnel

¹⁴ “å gjøre de afghanske sikkerhetsstyrkene i stand til selv å håndtere sikkerheten i landet”

¹⁵ The ISAF consists of 49 countries under the command of NATO and consists of ca. 87,000 soldiers. The country with the largest number of contributing men is the United States with ca. 60,000. Norway currently contributes ca. 140 soldiers (“About ISAF: Mission”, n.d.).

partake in, looks to give guidance in peace work and reconstruction. This includes two military advisors from Norway (“Oppdraget til de norske styrkene”, 2012).

Norwegian officers and military engineers also work with Afghan forces as mentors. In the beginning stages they worked very actively with the Afghans in all aspects of operations, but in 2013 this role was scaled back. They worked primarily as advisors following 2013. They also work with special forces, police, and other military divisions in this advisor capacity (“Oppdraget til de norske styrkene”, 2012).

The support that Norway provides in Afghanistan has not just been with military manpower, but also financially in various forms of development and military aid. Since 2008 Norway has supported Afghanistan with 750 million kroner every year through the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition the Norwegian authorities have pledged to support the Afghan army and police with 150 million kroner a year after the ISAF forces have ended their work in 2014. Since the international forces will be reduced and Afghanistan will need to take on more responsibilities themselves, Norway believes that it is important that the international community helps finance these Afghan forces to ensure the security of Afghanistan (“Oppdraget til de norske styrkene”, 2012).

1.4.2 Telemark Battalion

The Telemark Battalion is a unique division in the Norwegian Armed Forces. In this section I will provide information describing their structure, history, and function. The soldiers who are at the center of this debate are from the Mechanized Infantry Company 4 (Mek 4) in the Telemark Battalion.¹⁶

The Telemark Battalion is a division of the Norwegian military that is special due to the fact that it is made up of soldiers who are all professionals. This stands in contrast to the majority of the Norwegian military that comprises of conscripts. This conscription consists of obligatory service that is to be completed by all Norwegian men between the ages of 19-44, for a period of 19 months. The first 12 months of this obligatory service is called

¹⁶ I will refer to this group of soldiers as the “Mek 4” or “soldiers from the Telemark Battalion” in this thesis.

førstegangstjeneste or first time service. The man power that the military states is needed to be at full capacity of conscripts is 10,000 men. It is only men that are required, but women can volunteer for this duty if they please (“Førstegangstjeneste”, 2014).

The Telemark Battalion is at the core of the Norwegian Army’s Immediate Reaction Force and part of Brigade North, and it consists of five squadrons/companies.¹⁷ It was created in 1993 as Norway’s contribution to the NATO Immediate Response Force. This force is ready to be deployed at any time in domestic and international operations and consists of 450 professional full-time soldiers. The initial service is for three years and can be extended by three to six years depending on the situation. This means a total of six to nine years of total service is possible in the Telemark Battalion. They are some of the highest trained, most professional, and best equipped soldiers in the Norwegian Armed Forces (“Telemark bataljon”, 2012).

1.4.3 Alfa Article

Alfa is a men’s magazine who’s inaugural issue was released on October 1, 2010. This issue contained the article *Norway in War* (Rønningen, 2010). The article could be viewed as a new magazine trying to get attention in the media through controversy. The magazine was not well accepted by Norwegian men and they stopped publication in the end of 2011 (Arild Romarheim, Personal communication, 19.09.13).¹⁸

Magnus Rønningen writes, in the editor’s letter, a description of the article *Norway in War*. He labels it a documentary article and wants to make it clear that there is no doubt that the soldiers are doing a fantastic job, but the press coverage of this job is not sufficient. Rønningen states that Grete Faremo¹⁹ and the military is trying its hardest to “edit the truth”²⁰. He claims that he presents the truth through the descriptions found in the article (Rønningen, 2010). He says that politicians such as Faremo attempted to edit the truth through lies and half-truths, in order to control what was going to be included in Alfa’s

¹⁷ “Hærens Hurtige Reaksjonsstyrke (HRS)” and “Brigade Nord”

¹⁸ Arild Romarheim is an Associate Professor at MF, Norwegian School of Theology. He has done extensive research in the area of religion as it is portrayed in Norwegian periodicals.

¹⁹ Minister of Defense in Norway from 2008-2011.

²⁰ “å redigere sannheten”

descriptions of these elite Norwegian soldiers. In the closing line of this editor's letter he expresses what he hopes for the future of the magazine by saying, "there will be more trouble!"²¹ (Rønningen, 2010, p. 7). This gives an impression of what kind of image Alfa and Rønningen were trying to portray in this publication.

The article itself consists of interviews with soldiers by the editors of Alfa who spent eight days in Meymaneh, Afghanistan at a Norwegian military base. This time was spent primarily with the Mek 4 division of the Telemark Battalion. The pictures in the article were of the men with their weapons, vehicles they use, as well as pictures of a couple members of the Taliban. The article contained quotes about battles and vivid descriptions of the operations that the soldiers were involved in. These descriptions captured the thrill that many of the soldiers got from the violence and killing they had experienced in battle. One such quote describes an individual that saw what they described as the 'red mist' through their scope when one of their bullets hit the intended target (Rønningen, 2010, p. 109). One of the more controversial quotes was "to be in battle is worth the three months without fucking. That maybe sounds dumb, but it is better than having sex"²² (Rønningen, 2010, p. 112). Quotes and descriptions from this article were commonly used as headlines or the main topic of interest in many of the newspaper articles that I use as my source material. Especially the last one concerning the topic of sex.

1.4.4 Norse mythology

The battle cry of "to Valhall" is an example of a reference to Norse mythology that is used by soldiers from the Telemark Battalion. In this section I will provide a brief description of Norse mythology in general, followed by a description of *Valhall*.

The Norse religion was practiced in pre-Christian Norway during the Viking Age, which was between the years 750/800-1050 (Steinsland, 2005). It was a religion that was centered around gods and goddesses and the myths concerning them. It was a folk religion that was tied to the groups traditions, history, and culture (Steinsland, 2005, p. 31). It was not a

²¹ "Det vil bli mer bråk!"

²² "Det å være i kamp er verdt de tre månedene uten puling. Det høres kanskje teit ut, men det er bedre enn å knulle".

religion that had a system of organized dogmas, but focused more on rituals such as sacrifice, which helped with maintaining fertility on earth (Sødal & Eidhamar, 2005). Odin is the All-Father and main god in Norse mythology and the ruler of Asgard, the world in which the gods live. He is also the father of battle and lives in Valhall.

Valhall is the hall of the fallen Viking warriors that after they have died in battle. The warriors are carried to Valhall by the Valkyries, who are the female helpers of Odin. Odin sends the Valkyries out before the battle to decide which warriors are going to die. He does this for a reason. In Valhall he wants to have a gathering of the best warriors. This is because while they are in Valhall they will train for the next big cosmic battle, Ragnarok.²³ When they are not training for battle they feast on pork and mead, which is served to them by the Valkyries (Steinsland, 2005). It was a practice in Norse religion that the warriors bodies needed to be burned so that they could come to Valhall. All the objects that they were burned with would follow them to Valhall (Davidson, 1990).

1.5 The structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into 6 chapters. This first chapter has contained background information, the research questions, methods and materials, and context for the media debate.

Chapter 2 contains theoretical perspectives that are relevant to this thesis. I start out with a short description of theories concerning media and society. I describe the writings of Jostein Gripsrud, Cora Alexa Døving, and Siv Ellen Kraft. Focus is placed on what kind of relationship exists between the two entities and how this contributes to cultural identity. I follow this with a detailed description of varied components of a Norwegian cultural identity, which can also be described as *Norwegianness*. This includes an overview of the theory of cultural memory as presented by Jan and Aleida Assman, which I use as a way to give perspective on how cultural identity can be formed and evolve. Strong emphasis is placed on the ideas of *kulturarv* (Norwegian cultural heritage) and peacefulness as prominent

²³ Ragnarok is the time of the destruction of the gods. It is to be filled with great battles, strife between men, the sun and moon being devoured by a wolf, a great cold, and battles between the gods and monsters. All the major gods will die in battle as they kill the different monsters. Men will also be destroyed with a great fire. But this is not the end of the world. Earth will rise again and the sons of the great gods will rule a new and cleansed earth that no longer has suffering and evil (Davidson, 1990, p. 37-38)

components of a modern Norwegian identity. Under the idea of cultural heritage I go further into a description of rural and Christian cultural heritages. Christianity will be explored further with the theory of vicarious religion as presented by Grace Davie.

Chapters 3 and 4 contains my analysis, which is organized thematically. Chapter 3 looks at the theme of a warrior culture. I begin with a chronological description of the occurrences of the idea of a warrior culture in this media debate. I do this with quotes and descriptive examples. This will be followed by a description of the two main ways that warrior culture was used and described by contributors to this media debate. I go further with a theme that I call the “American other”, where I describe portrayals and comparisons of American and Norwegian soldiers using the identity formation concept of “the other”. In Chapter 4 references to Norse mythology and Viking symbolism are analyzed. I start with a chronological description of these references from the media debate, shown through descriptive examples. This is followed by three themes that emerged concerning how the battle cries and Norse/Viking references were used. These uses were: dealing with death, motivation, and a company identity. The last part of the chapter contains an analysis of an article that can be looked at as an exceptional case in this media debate. It includes opinions and ideas that were not found in the other articles and gives another perspective on the “to Valhall” debate.

Chapter 5 is the discussion where I look at two main themes. The first being peacefulness as a part of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity. This discussion on peacefulness is broken down into four sub-topics. They are: the role of Norwegian soldiers, motivation, macho attitudes, and Norway as an exceptionally peaceful country. The second theme is Norwegian Christianity. I first look at how the Christian cultural heritage in Norway is used as a source of values in the Norwegian cultural identity. This is followed by an examination of the role that military chaplains play in the Norwegian Armed Forces and what this role shows about Norwegian culture and the place that Christianity holds in it.

Chapter 6 contains the conclusion. Chapter 7 is the references and Chapter 8 contains the Appendices.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

This chapter will consist of two main areas of theoretical perspectives. The first is media and society where I will describe theories concerning different aspects of the relationship between the media and society. This will include the theories and ideas from Jostein Gripsrud (2002) along with Cora Alexa Døving and Siv Ellen Kraft (2013), among others.

This will be followed by a detailed description of several components of a Norwegian cultural identity. I will begin with the idea of peacefulness as central components of this identity. I will attempt to give perspective on the idea of Norwegianness through the concept of *kulturarv* or cultural heritage, with focus on rural heritage and Christianity. I will use the theory of cultural memory as described by Jan and Aleida Assmann, as a process through which cultural identity can potentially be formed.

In an attempt to grasp how Christianity is shown as a component of Norwegian cultural heritage I will be looking at the theory of vicarious religion as it is presented by Grace Davie. The theory of vicarious religion aims to give perspective on how Christianity is possibly operating in modern Norwegian society. Concerning other aspects of a Norwegian cultural identity I look to the writings of Marianne Gullestad, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Iver B. Neumann and Lars Laird Iversen.

2.1 Media and Society

The *relationship* between the media and society is dynamic and can be seen as a vital component in the process of cultural identity formation. This is one of the reasons that I have decided to look at these events through the mediated picture that is presented in the newspaper articles. Media scholar Jostein Gripsrud states that the media contributes to our definition and understanding of the world around us. It also provides material that helps us understand ourselves and our place in the world (Gripsrud, 2002). Gripsrud believes that the media is a contributing factor in helping people define what sets them apart from others. He says that, “popular culture audiences relate actively to the media that surround them, and pick what they need for their own cultural activities, based on their own values, norms and interests” (Gripsrud, 2002, p. 57). I use this as a central argument in my discussion

concerning cultural identity formation in the Norwegian context, through examples found in my source material. In the quote above, Gripsrud shows that the media's role in identity formation is not just a cause and effect relationship. It can be the effect that the media has on individuals or society, to help them understand and define the world around them. It is also the way that audiences of the media use what they consume for their own purposes, based on their own interests and beliefs. That is why I describe it as a relationship. It is both sides acting and reacting, with a large number of dynamics and functions involved. This relationship has the potential to produce, reflect, and expand the elements that compose a group's cultural identity.

Maria Grazia Busa also discusses this relationship between society and the news. She says that "reading, watching or listening to the news fulfills our desire and our civic duty to understand what is going on around us; it increases our knowledge about the world and lets us form our own opinions and ideas of current affairs. It also provides us with topics for discussion during social and professional events" (Busa, 2014). This description of consuming the news as a kind of civic duty shows another dynamic in this relationship. It also displays how mass media is one of the main sources that people use in their daily life to receive information about the world and current events and then use this information in their social interactions.

When looking at the finished products from the media such as newspapers and TV news programs it is important to remember the structure and production processes behind the final product that is consumed by the public. There are economic considerations, deadlines, societal importance at the time, political influence, academic influence, etc. (Døving & Kraft, 2013). Gripsrud describes this with a word he borrowed from the vocabulary used in economics. He says that "the market" decides how media develops. The types of stories and the appearance of the news are based on demand and what makes the most money (Gripsrud, 2002). Journalists also have the ability to influence what they will include in their stories. This happens through how they build up the story, what headline they use, what aspects they focus on and what aspects they marginalize (Døving & Kraft, 2013). All of these factors

influence what kind of stories will be deemed newsworthy as well as the content that will be included in individual stories.

These ideas concerning the relationship between the media and society were what I kept in mind when I performed my analysis of these texts. It was vital to remember throughout the entire process that I was looking at these events through this mediated lens. By using this type of approach I was able to look at these events from a different angle and gain varied insights.

2.2 Norwegian Cultural Identity

There are certain conceived characteristics that all cultures use to define themselves and set them apart as a unique group of people. I choose to describe these characteristics as their *cultural identity*. Components of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity can be seen as the underlying cause for many of the reactions to events that comprise this media debate. This identity is constructed by both those who are a part of the culture and by those on the outside. Cultural identity is not fixed, but changes with time, space, and context. In this thesis I am *not* looking to give an absolute definition of a Norwegian cultural identity. My intention is to analyze and discuss limited components of a Norwegian cultural identity, as they are found in this “to Valhall” debate from 2010-2011.²⁴

In Norwegian the term *norskhet* is used to describe ideas, objects, or anything that is distinctly Norwegian. The English translation that I have decided to use is *Norwegianness*.²⁵ I will be using the term *Norwegianness* in reference to ideas or components of a Norwegian cultural identity.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen says that the construction of a cultural identity is important for two reasons. First, it helps to create a social identity and protect the people within that social identity’s boarder. The second, is that this construction can turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

²⁴ I acknowledge that the debate and discussion surrounding cultural identity may be seen as outdated and has been explored in-depth by many academics and researchers. Acknowledging this, I choose to use it as a central theme in my thesis because it is relevant to the type of analysis that I am conducting.

²⁵ I found the term *Norwegianness* used by Lars Laird Iversen in his book, *Learning to be Norwegian: A case study of identity management in religious education in Norway* (2012).

If there are certain positive aspects that a group can see from their past (real or imagined) there is the idea that building these into a construction means that they eventually might just become true (Eriksen, 1993). This idea of deciding what ideas a group wants to include from the past fits in with the theory of cultural memory that I describe later on.

Eriksen also states that debates concerning cultural identity take stronger hold and gain momentum in small countries because they feel pressure from larger countries and the influence that they have. He believes that in Europe this gives these small countries a more secure, distinct and sharply defined cultural identity. This is a cultural identity that they hold on to and protect. Norway can be viewed as one of these small European countries that looks to defend their culture and show their uniqueness (Eriksen, 2010).

Globalization can also be a contributing factor to this desire to protect their identity and show their uniqueness. With globalization, information and ideas from other parts of the world can be easily accessed anywhere. This can lead to smaller countries feeling vulnerable and in turn try to reject international influences. This defense of traditional culture can also be a reaction to immigrants that are entering the country. These immigrants come from cultures which may seem very foreign to the native population. These new people and ideas may be looked at as a threat. In occasions when you meet something or someone that is foreign to you, it can make you question your own identity and discuss it in new ways. In the case of this study all of these factors play a role, in varying degrees, in the formation of a Norwegian cultural identity (Eriksen, 2010).

A tie to the past is important in the formation of their cultural identity in the present. In the case of Norway this cultural identity is a part of the national identity as well. Norway had been in unions and under the control of both the Danish and Swedish kingdoms in the past. From its constitution in 1814 to its peaceful secession from Sweden in 1905, Norway in its current form as an independent nation is quite young in comparison to much of Western Europe. During the national building period it was imperative that a national image was portrayed to the rest of the world, to show that they were unique and different. It is helpful if

this image has the appearance of being old with deep roots, it gives it a sense of legitimacy (Eriksen, 1993).

There are certain historical factors that have contributed to this sense of Norwegianness. One of these factors that Norwegians have used in their identity formation is that they have never directly been a colonial power (Leira, 2007). Later on in the description of peacefulness I will discuss how this has helped Norway to be a leading actor in peace talks around the world, as well as having important roles in international organizations. Norway's history also lacks a feudal system that was common in many parts of Western Europe. This has led to a social structure that was and is relatively non-hierarchical. In relation to its military, Norway does not have a military past that it celebrates and connects to its present day culture. This may be due to its historical union with Denmark, which meant that they did not have a military of their own for many years (Eriksen, 1993).

The identity that a group or individual has does not consist of just one component or idea. There are many levels of identity that can be taken into consideration. Gripsrud describes this as a "patchwork of identities" (Gripsrud, 2002, p. 10). Examples of aspects that can make up this patchwork are ethnicity, language, religion, local/regional association, subcultures, and inclusion in varied groups or subgroups. People hold many identities at the same time and different combinations of identities throughout their lifetime. It is important to consider the influence that all of these levels of identity have on people in their daily lives and in their worldview.

Social anthropologist Marianne Gullestad discusses how in Norway the local/regional component of an individual's identity is very important. She believes that the place that a person comes from plays a very important role in their identity formation. The connection to the *hjemsted* or homestead is important and viewed positively in the Norwegian context. This can also be shown through different dialects that come from different local or regional areas. Gullestad says that a dialect can be "a sign of anything from personal characteristics to social identity to worldview"²⁶ (Gullestad, 2010, p. 231). This can be described as people looking to

²⁶ "et tegn på alt fra personlige karaktertrekk til sosial identitet og verdensanskuelse"

their roots when they are in the process of defining their identity. This is also true in this case of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity. Looking for a connection to the past and people's roots is an idea that is woven throughout this thesis.

2.2.1 Cultural Memory

One theory that I consider helpful in grasping the construction of cultural identity is *cultural memory*. Jan Assmann describes cultural memory as “a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation” (J. Assmann, 1995, p. 126). He describes this memory as being maintained through objects such as texts, rites, monuments, practice, and observances. All of these can help them to cultivate their self-image. Through this use of memory a group can have unity and show which aspects set them apart from other groups. This cultural memory makes a sharp distinction between those that do and do not belong. One of the main ideas of cultural memory is that the culture itself decides which parts of the past they want to include and use to construct their identity. As well as which parts they do not want to include and would rather leave forgotten in the past.

Aleida Assmann describes cultural memory as how “we define ourselves through that which collectively we remember and forget” (A. Assmann, 2011, p. 54). She says that this creation of identity is actively constructed, not just passively happening over a period of time. When it comes to the cohesion of a group she also describes how cultural memory helps to ensure the uniqueness and continuity of a group. One aspect that is pertinent to this debate is the role that a national army plays in this identity through cultural memory. Assmann says that the military is to be “an organ” of this collective identity (A. Assmann, 2011). This means that they are to work within the confines of the cultural identity that has been formed through a collective memory. They are the tool that the state can use to pursue goals that it has pertaining to foreign policy.

Agnes Heller (2001) also discusses how cultural memory is beneficial and she believes vital in the constructing and maintaining of identity. A group of people exists and survives through this cultural memory, not through their biological survival. This identity is built up by various

means, the most important and powerful, according to Heller, being religion. Religion, in her opinion, holds the important function of critic. It can be critical of the memories and ideas that they use to form their cultural identity. The identity creation happens when members of the group select from old memories. They take these old memories, extend, refashion and reinterpret them so that they will fit into the present context. This shows the way that they wish to be perceived. Heller believes that if a group does not have a cultural memory that is shared, they do not have an identity (Heller, 2001).

2.3 Peacefulness

If there is one word that embodies the Norwegian identity on the international stage it is peaceful. In international politics Norway is a country that is known as being a key player in relation to its size when it comes to the role it takes in international peace talks. It often plays the role of mediator and facilitator. It is the country that Alfred Nobel gave the job of awarding the Nobel Peace Prize every year. At the time did not mean very much, but in today's world it is arguably one of the greatest symbols of peace (Hanssen-Bauer, 2005). Norway can even be described as a country who's main "brand" is peace and development in the global arena (Tvedt, 2010).²⁷

A number of Norway's most respected national heroes are people that championed for peace at home and abroad. Fridtjof Nansen is a prime example of this. He worked on behalf of refugees and people that were displaced by WWI as well as establishing the Nansen Passport, which was a passport that could be used by stateless persons. He also helped Norway become a member of the League of Nations in 1920 (Bamat, 2012). Another Norwegian that promoted peace through his writing and campaigning was one of Norway's greatest writers Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson ("Why Norway?", n.d.). Oslo, the capital of Norway also has various organizations and institutes that are world leaders in peace and human rights research. Examples of these are the Nobel Institute, The Peace Research Institute Oslo, and The Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights.²⁸

²⁷ Also see Townsend, J. (2011, August 4). Branding Peace: Norway's Identity Put to the Test. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from <http://huffingtonpost.com>

²⁸ More information concerning these organizations can be found here: ("Nobel Peace Prize", n.d.) <http://nobelpeaceprize.org>; ("About PRIO", n.d.) <http://www.prio.no>; ("History", n.d.) <http://www.oslocenter.no>

Terje Tvedt (2010) states that it is not possible to understand the Norwegian identity on the international stage without understanding Norway in the context of its development aid and peace work. He refers to this image of Norway as the *Norwegian goodness regime*.²⁹ This *regime* focuses on development and striving to make the world a better place through peaceful means and humanitarian aid. It is shown through symbolic actions such as the Crown Prince and Princess studying development during their time studying abroad. This focus on peace and development aid is prioritized by almost all parties and is taken into consideration concerning the national budget of Norway (Tvedt, 2010).

In 2012 Norway used \$4.7 billion, which is 0.93% of their gross national income, on official development aid.³⁰ The United States is the country that gave the largest amount of official development aid in 2012 (\$30.46 billion), this amounts to 0.19% of their gross national income. Even though the United States total amount was higher, the Norwegian percentage of their gross national income devoted to aid was much higher. There were only two countries that gave more than Norway, based on percentage of gross national income, they were Luxembourg (1.00%) and Sweden (0.99%) (*Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development: OECD*, accessed 11.03.14).³¹ This shows that Norway is a world leader when it comes to the percent of their gross national income that goes towards development aid.

Another possible example of this goodness regime is a TV fundraiser that is put on by NRK every year, which raises money for both domestic and international causes or organizations. It receives a great deal of attention in the media and good response from the population (Tvedt, 2010). In 2013 the NRK TV fundraiser raised approximately 230 million kroner for the National Association for Public Health (“TV-aksjonen”, n.d.). These types of fundraisers and

²⁹ “Norske godhets-regime”

³⁰ Official Development Assistance is defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee as resource “flows to countries and territories on the *DAC list of ODA Recipients* and to multilateral institutions, which are provided by official agencies”. The focus is on “the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective” which is “concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent” (“Official Development Assistance - definition and coverage”, n.d.).

³¹ Norway, as well as a number of other countries, have given over the UN Millennium Project’s goal of 0.7% of rich countries’ gross national product that goes towards official development assistance. (“The 0.7% Target”, n.d.)

development aid are example of Norway's commitment to making the world a better place through peaceful means.

Norway has played a key role in many high profile peace talks that have taken place in the last 20 years. Prime examples are Guatemala, Palestine/Israel, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Sudan, Columbia, and Haiti (Hanssen-Bauer, 2005). This involvement takes the form of political intervention, humanitarian aid, development aid, Norwegian NGOs, Norwegian Church Aid and various other aid organizations. The way that Norway operates in these situations is sometimes referred to as *The Norwegian Model*. According to Jon Hanssen-Bauer this model can take three different forms. The first is that Norway acts as the facilitator for negotiations between the groups involved. Secondly, Norway helps to set up a back channel that the parties involved can use for secret negotiations. Lastly, as an actor in an international coalition, for example working with the United Nations (Hanssen-Bauer, 2005).

Hanssen-Bauer describes six characteristics that he sees as central to The Norwegian Model's effectiveness. The first is that when Norway is in the role of facilitator, they are a patient facilitator. He believes that Norway has political consensus when it comes to the promotion of peace and reconciliation. This political consensus can possibly be explained by a "moral commitment" that all of the major parties share in helping to create peace around the world (Bamat, 2012). Because of this commitment Norway strives for consistency as a facilitator, even if the Norwegian political climate changes. The second characteristic is that Norway has the resources available to do this kind of work. This is done through both financial support and human resources. Norway sets aside room in the budget as well as frees up man power. The third characteristic is cooperation with national and international non-governmental organizations. These organizations in many cases have a very specific focus and expertise. If Norway cooperates with them they can save resources and time. The organizations also have networks that are already set up and working.

His fourth point, is that the Norwegian Model consists of an interaction between diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, the government, and non-state actors. All of these different groups and ideas working together is vital for this type of work to be successful. The fifth

characteristic is that Norway is looked at as impartial by many in the international arena. This can be due to the fact that Norway has never been a direct colonial power and their long tradition for peace. Norway is viewed as neutral and this is extremely beneficial when it comes to being a peace helper. The sixth characteristic is that Norway has international leverage and strength and that they work closely with those that will be mediators. Norway has close military and political ties with many of the world powers, but is not seen as an oppressive state, which means that feuding parties might turn to them to help open a channel to a world power that otherwise would have been inaccessible (Hanssen-Bauer, 2005).

The idea that Norwegians perceive themselves as peaceful is central to the Norwegian Model and played an important role in its creation. Hanssen-Bauer believes that these six characteristics demonstrate that it is the way that Norway works and functions in this role that gives them success. This is shown through an aspect of the Norwegian Model called the *ownership model*. In this model the parties that are involved in the negotiations need to take ownership of the processes that are happening. It is not Norway that owns the talks, but the countries or parties that are involved in the talks (Goodhand, Klem, & Sorbo, 2011). Norway also attempts to go into this role with a lack of self-interest in the case. They try to look at the parties that are involved and see what is best for them, not for the Norwegian state or economy. Peace is the ultimate goal. As well as having the parties involved take the ultimate responsibility for creating peace and reconciliation in their specific situation (Bamat, 2012).

This promotion of peace may not be entirely unselfish. If Norway is a central figure in a high profile peace negotiation that serve the interests of a world power in one form or another, this can also benefit Norway. When that world power has seen Norway in this important role and on the international stage they may be more willing to help them with their own self-interests in another area (Bamat, 2012). These types of political actions can be the door openers to the European Union and the United States (Tvedt, 2010). This is not always something that Norway's government can control, and may not be an underlying goal, but it can be a result that is still beneficial for Norway politically and economically.

Thoams Hylland Eriksen and Iver B. Neumann describe how certain nations or groups of people look at themselves as exceptional, for varied reasons. Some believe they were “chosen” by God, others because they have inspired leadership. In the case of Norway, their peacefulness is something that can set them apart as exceptional. Eriksen and Neumann believe that this idea of exceptional peacefulness arose from the 1890’s when Norway peacefully separated from Sweden. In addition Norway did not participate as an active aggressors in either world war, which helped them to maintain this peaceful image and status. During the Cold War Norway was an active member of NATO that exported weapons, but Eriksen and Neumann believe that this still did not shake the picture of Norway as exceptionally peaceful (Eriksen & Neumann, 2011).

A document was produced by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, entitled *Norwegian Self-image and Norwegian International Affairs*.³² In this document a description is given of how Norway views itself in relations to the rest of the world. Especially in relation to international affairs. There are three main descriptions or characteristics that are listed in this document. They are Norway as a peaceful country, Norway as a giant in development aid, and Norway as the United Nation’s best friend. Norway is also described as a small country, an outsider nation, Atlanticist, unselfish, and altruistic (Leira, 2007). When it comes to the aspect of peacefulness this document claims that one of the main components of Norway’s peacefulness is that it has a peaceful tradition which goes back 100 years. This peaceful image is therefore claimed to be the oldest consistent self-image in Norway (Leira, 2007). The document also wants to make it clear that even though Norway participates in military operations in Afghanistan, they still hold on to their peaceful self-image.

This document from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs also discusses how Norway has a strong relationship with the United States. This relationship benefits Norway through mutual defense due to both countries being members of NATO. This relationship also helps Norway to push its peaceful agenda on the global scale. Norway is very influential on the international stage, but they do have restrictions in what they can accomplish due to their small size. This relationship with the US helps with this problem. Norway can use its

³² “Norske selvbilder og norsk utenrikspolitikk”

relationship with the United States to get them interested in peaceful causes and ideas that Norway could not accomplish themselves due to manpower or budgetary issues. With the United State's participation, it provides them with more resources as well as strengthened legitimacy when it comes to these goals, due to the United States position as a world power (Leira, 2007).³³

Peacefulness in Norway can be looked at from a perspective of everyday life activities. Marianne Gullestad was a Norwegian social anthropologist that focused on Norwegians in their everyday life. In her research she found that the words *peace* and *tranquility* came up very often. This was not the usage of *peace* concerning a lack of war and violence, but described by the ideas of quite and calm, silence, a peaceful home, and keeping peace with neighbors, colleagues, etc. In the interviews that she conducted within this research *peace* and *tranquility* were used as very positive adjectives. When they were used it indicated that the person was a good member of society and did not cause too much trouble or stand out. Gullestad also believes that this peace and quite is tied to the Norwegian home life and cabins. Many Norwegians own their own cabins or rent them for holidays. Gullestad also mentions a component of Norwegian identity that will be looked at more in-depth later, namely Norwegians as “farmers in the city” (Gullestad, 1989, p. 137). This being due to the fact that many people who live in the cities can trace their relatives back just a couple of generations and find that many of them were either farmers or fisherman. Both of which are professions that can be perceived as fairly peaceful due to the fact that they live and work in rural areas.

2.4 Kulturarv

Kulturarv, which can be translated to *cultural heritage*, is a term that is commonly used in the description of Norwegian cultural identity and Norwegianness. As mentioned previously by Eriksen, ideas that appear old can help give them a sense of legitimacy. This is the idea behind cultural heritage. Døving and Kraft describe that when they did an Atekst search of the term “kulturarv” in the 2000s they found that there was a large connection with the theme of Norwegianness (Døving and Kraft, 2013). Cultural heritage can encompass a variety of

³³ This matches up with the previous statements from Tvedt (2010) concerning how working together with larger powers can benefit Norway.

aspects. Many associate it with art, architecture, music, and literature. It can also include references to philosophy, history, academics, and religion. On another level it can be seen as the daily way of life that people see as important and want to see carried on in future generations.

The Progress Party is a political party in Norway that often utilizes the term cultural heritage in their party rhetoric. They look at it as a part of the Norwegian identity that they believe is threatened and under attack, an attack on “Norwegian identity, society and traditions”³⁴ (Døving and Kraft, 2013, p. 83), which is mainly coming from Muslim immigrants. They believe that there is a dichotomy between the values of the Muslim cultures and those of the Christian cultural heritage of Norway. Therefore they create policies and vote in ways that will protect what they consider to be the foundational values of Norwegian society.

There are many different ideas that could be described under the idea of cultural heritage. I will be providing a detailed description of two aspects of cultural heritage in Norway. These two aspects are rural cultural heritage and Christian cultural heritage.

2.4.1 Rural Cultural Heritage

Rural cultural heritage is valued in modern day Norway and is a component from the past that many Norwegians find their roots in. Eriksen states that, “Norwegian identity, as it is generally defined by Norwegians, is primarily a rural identity, not an urban one” (Thomas Hylland Eriksen, 1993, p. 19). Many times this rural identity is tied to the concept of peacefulness. The image of the “peaceful farmer” is what often comes to mind.

As mentioned previously Norway lacks the historical system of feudalism that was found in many parts of medieval Europe. In the past most people lived a rural life as subsistence farmers or fisherman, for those in coastal areas. Due to Norway’s geography there is very little arable land that can be used by farmers, approximately only 2.5% (“CIA World Factbook: Norway”, n.d.). Due to Norway’s mountainous geography the areas that were favorable for farming were spread out and were not particularly large in size. This made it

³⁴ “norsk identitet, samfunn og tradisjoner”

difficult for land holders to create large farms were peasants would work the land, as is found in a feudal system. This meant that most people owned their own land and lived a rural subsistence lifestyle. These rural areas were also very separated due to the geographical boundaries of mountains. Eriksen believes that this separation could be an explanation for why many Norwegians are considered private and introverted. They are skeptical of outsiders, which is a characteristic that is commonly associated to rural populations. Norway was also urbanized much later than much of the rest of Europe, not until the 20th century, which can also be an explanation for this connection to a rural cultural heritage (Eriksen, 1993).

This rural identity was one that Norwegians used in their construction of Norwegian nationalism and a cultural identity (Eriksen & Neumann, 2011). This pride of rural life can be seen today in examples found in popular media. There are several television shows that have a farm theme, *Farmen* (The Farmer) and *Jakten på Kjærlighet: Bonderomatikk* (The Hunt for Love: Farmer Romance).³⁵ I also believe that the King's farm on Bygdøy, which is a farm that belongs to the royal family that is not very far from the Oslo city center, could possibly be a symbol of this rural pride. Many of the people that live in the city have moved there from the country side or have relatives that live there. They like to keep this connection with rural areas and take pride in the place that they originally come from. (Eriksen, 1993).

Eriksen and Neumann (2011) provide more examples of this rural or farmer identity as a part of the Norwegian cultural heritage. They say that when it comes to objects that are protected by the Norwegian state 96% of them are buildings. A great number of these buildings have a connection to the farmer culture in one form or another. They found this surprising due to the fact that there are five times as many Norwegians that have a connection to a of costal culture than to a farming culture (Eriksen & Neumann, 2011, p. 425). They also say that even though the majority of the Norwegian population lives in city areas the *bygda* or village is still a symbol of “the real Norway” (Eriksen & Neumann, 2011, p. 425).

³⁵ More information about “Farmen”, (n.d.) and “Jakten på Kjærlighet: Bonderomatikk”, (n.d.) can be found here: [http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmen_\(Norge\)](http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmen_(Norge)) & http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakten_på_kjærligheten

2.4.2 Christian Cultural Heritage

Another aspect of Norwegian cultural heritage that is commonly discussed is Christianity. Morgenbladet called << det kristne kulturarv >> (the Christian cultural heritage) the buzzword of 2004 (Døving & Kraft, 2013). According to Døving and Kraft Christian cultural heritage is a fairly recent term in Norwegian popular debate, with its roots in the 1990s. They say that the Labour Party in Norway started using the term in relation to the debate at the time concerning the religious education subjects and what the contents of these subjects would be, in the Norwegian public school system. They focused on Christianity because of the cultural importance that it holds and the way that it can be used as a binding force in the Norwegian society. (Døving & Kraft, 2013).

When the term *heritage* is used it is inferred that something is being inherited from the past. According to Døving and Kraft this can have two opposite meanings in reference to Christianity. The first is that the idea that is being inherited, is dead. This may be referring to God or belief, or a combination of the two, being dead in society. The other possibility in the Norwegian context, is that it is a continuation of an old religion which has its foundation in the past. This continuation from the past can be displayed through “personal Christian, Christian people, country, nation, state, culture and institutions”³⁶ (Døving & Kraft, 2013, p. 78).

Christianity as a central components of a Norwegian cultural heritage also finds legal precedence in the Norwegian Constitution. Article 2 states that “Our values will remain our Christian and humanist heritage” (“The Constitution - Complete text”, 2013). This is a recent example of how the Norwegian society has decided to continue to acknowledge Christianity as an important part of its cultural heritage and use this heritage as a basis for values and laws. Sødal and Eidhamar believe that there are also “historical, cultural and legal reasons why Norway can be regarded as a Christian nation” (2005, p. 41). They state that Christianity came to Norway over a thousand years ago and that many different aspects of Norwegian culture are influenced by Christianity. They also make the point that the king and queen must be members of The Norwegian Church (Sødal & Eidhamar, 2005).

³⁶ “personlig kristen, kristent folk, land, nasjon, stat, kultur, og institusjoner”

Going along with Sødal and Eidhamar's historical focus on Christianity as a component of cultural heritage I will now present a short historical overview of Christianity in Norway. The pre-Christian era in the Norway was dominated by Norse mythology. Starting around the year 800 AD Christianity started to be predominately practiced in the areas that would eventually make up modern Norway. The king that finished the Christianizing process was Olav Haraldsson, also known as St. Olav. Up until the time of the Reformation, Norway was under the framework of the Roman Catholic Church and this had a large impact on everyday life. (Sødal & Eidhamar, 2005).

Following the Protestant Reformation, Norway became a Lutheran country in 1536-37 while still in union with Denmark. The Reformation and Lutheranism focused on national churches over the universality of the Catholic Church (Sødal & Eidhamar, 2005). This led to the creation of the Church of Norway.³⁷ Lutheranism was the state religion in Norway until 2012, when a change was made to the constitution, which gave the church more autonomy. It also restructured the church and state relationship so that the Church of Norway was no longer the state church. They do however still receive support from the state. The Norwegian church and the state have a very close and complex relationship, which will continue to transform with time.

Around 78% of the Norwegian population are members of the Norwegian Church³⁸ and around 4-5% are members of a Christian church outside of the Norwegian church.³⁹ Due to this fact that a high percentage of the population are members of the Norwegian church, many people take part in church ceremonies such as baptism, confirmation, weddings and church funerals. While membership numbers are quite high the number of members that are in church on any given Sunday is around 2% and around 10% go to a church service or meeting one time a month or more. On average those that are members of free Christian churches are more active than those that are members of the Norwegian Church (Repstad,

³⁷ "Det Norske Kirke"

³⁸ According to www.kirken.no. ("Om Den Norske Kirke", n.d.).

³⁹ The rest of the population is divided between Muslims, Humanists, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha'i, Jews, Sikhs, and people that do not have membership in any organized religion. ("Religious communities and life stance communities, 2013).

2010). Even with the low number of people that actively attend church, membership in the Norwegian State church is closely tied to the Norwegian and in a larger sense Scandinavian identity. Loek Halman states that “being a church member is almost a citizen’s duty in the Scandinavian countries” (Halman, 1994, p. 64). This contributes to Christianity being a central component in the Norwegian cultural identity.

In his book *Learning to be Norwegian*, Lars Laird Iversen (2012) studies religious education in Norway. He describes how in the 1990’s the Labour Party, as mentioned earlier, used Christian cultural heritage as a resource for social cohesion and governmental identity management. This included religious education courses in the Norwegian public school system. When it comes to the content of the religious education curriculum it was the “rhetoric of Christian values and cultural heritage” that was focused on, not the religious aspects (Iversen, 2012, p. 182). There was a great deal of debate in Norway during the early 2000s pertaining to religious education and the courses RLE and KRL.⁴⁰

In another study concerning religious education, and more specifically the core curriculum of the Norwegian state schools, Bengt-Ove Andreassen (2014) discusses Christianity as a component of Norway’s cultural heritage and points to the role it plays in the core curriculum. He looks at the core curriculum from 1993, also referred to as CC93. He describes Christianity as a “deep current in our nation’s history” (Andreassen, 2014, p. 2). According to Andreassen the CC93 describes Christianity as being “related to a range of cultural concepts and values, without any reference to religious contents such as the Bible, rituals and doctrines. Christianity is a basis for Norwegian culture and democracy, and ensures that everything or everybody is included” (2014, p. 5). According to this description the religious aspects are not focused on, but the role that Christianity plays as a component of a cultural identity. Andreassen also shows how the CC93 describes Christianity as the “social glue and a precondition for national integration” which is needed in Norwegian society to

⁴⁰ This debate involved some groups who wanted to change the subject or at least make it possible for exemptions from it. The complained that the subject violated the parents’ right to make decisions determining their children’s “religious nurture”. Nine individuals took their case to court. They were supported by the Humanist Association. The Norwegian Government won in the Norwegian courts but the case was heard by two international legal institutions, The United Nations Committee on Human Rights (UNCHR) and The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The UNCHR criticized the Norwegian state (2004) and the ECHR ruled against Norway (2007). These decisions and rulings caused the Norwegian Government to modify the subject (Iversen, 2012).

understand language, customs, and history. Lastly Andreassen sums this all up by saying that this curriculum shows that Christianity is related to democracy, human rights, language and cultural heritage, more than references to Christian doctrine, the Bible, and rituals (Andreassen, 2014).

2.4.3 Vicarious Religion

The theory of *vicarious religion* as proposed by sociologist of religion Grace Davie (2006) is a beneficial perspective in describing and analyzing Christianity in modern day Norway and the role that it plays in society. She defines vicarious religion as “the notion of religion performed by an active minority on behalf of a much larger number, who (implicitly at least) not only understand, but, quite clearly, approve of what the minority is doing” (Davie, 2006, p. 24).

Davie describes four ways in which she believes religion can operate vicariously in a society. The first being that churches and church leaders perform rituals on behalf of others. Examples of this being ceremonies such as baptisms, marriages, and funerals. The second form is believing on behalf of people, which can be done by religious professionals or regular church goers. This can be looked at as if it is their job to believe. The third way is that these religious professionals and church goers are expected to embody a certain social and moral order. They are to live a life that is set apart from everyday society, in a way they are expected to be exceptional. When they do not live up to this high standard they are viewed as hypocrites. The fourth and final way is through the church being a space for debates that are unresolved in society. Examples of these being abortion and same sex marriage (Davie, 2006).

Davie (2007, p. 9) uses the analogy of an iceberg to portray vicarious religion. She describes it in this way:

It is easy enough both to measure and to take note of the part of the iceberg that emerges from the water. But this is to ignore the mass underneath, which is invisible for most of the time - but without which the visible part would not be there at all.

The part of the iceberg that is above the water is visible religion that is displayed through active participants in religious groups and activities. The ice mass beneath the water is religion operating vicariously. With this analogy Davie demonstrates two ideas. First, that the visible religion gets support from the parts of religion that are operating vicariously. Secondly, she displays vicarious religion as something that cannot be counted in a quantitative manner (Davie, 2007). This is due to the fact that it takes many forms and can hold different meanings for different people depending on the context. The majority of people have entrusted the act of religion to the active minority, but rarely partake themselves. This idea matches up with the statistics concerning church attendance in the Nordic countries and more specifically Norway.

In the Nordic context Davie describes this vicarious religion with the phrase “belonging without believing”. By this she means that many in the Nordic countries remain members of the Lutheran churches, use them for occasional ceremonies such as baptisms, marriages and holidays, but do not attend on a regular basis and or necessarily believe in the core beliefs of Lutheranism (Davie, 2007). These ceremonies therefore have more of a cultural significance than a religious one. She believes that they even look at their membership in the church as part of their national identity.⁴¹ Another aspect that she sees concerning the Nordic countries is that they want to protect the cultural aspects of religion and the church, such as church buildings and music. They are part of their cultural heritage and legacies of the past and is where they have their roots.

In countries that have or have had a state church, the church can be viewed as a public utility, when religions is operating vicariously. Its services are available to the entire public when and if they decide to use it and are in some cases funded by taxes. Chris Ducker describes this as keeping religion “on hand for when people want or need it” (Ducker, 2011, p. 3). This is shown in the example of church buildings being considered public instead of private spaces. Many churches attract people for their architectural and historical significance.

⁴¹ This matches up with the same idea of national identity and church membership that is presented by Loek Halman (1994).

Vicarious religion also has a role to play when societal debates take place and this is often shown through the media. Davie (2006) believes that in societies that have a form of vicarious religion the church and religious experts are expected to take part in debates, when it comes to the moral or ethical implications. Two examples of these controversial debates being abortion and same-sex marriage. In certain instances the church building is looked at as the place where debates can be held. Church leaders are also looked to as moral experts and the population wants to hear what they have to say. This does not mean that they will agree with them, but they still have the chance and many would say the obligation to contribute.

When it comes to public debate Pål Repstad (2010) refers to a survey concerning religion in Norway, which states that almost 2 out of 3 respondents believe that it is a positive thing to have religious leaders as participants in societal debates on current issues.⁴² The same surveys showed that 8 out of 10 people did not want religious leaders to influence people on how they should vote in political elections. Repstad also points to a trend in Norway that people describe themselves as spiritual but not religious, which could also be looked at as an aspect of this vicarious religion and the changing religious climate.

In Norway this vicarious religion can be demonstrated by the number of people that use the church for the services that it provides as a public utility, as mentioned above. A high percentage of the population still partake in the ceremonies of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funerals within the Norwegian Lutheran Church, even if they do not regularly attend church services. Christianity, which in the past was very important for many Norwegians in their daily lives has become something that a number of people still actively practice. While others approve of it and see worth in it, but do not actively practice themselves. In certain debates they also use the church and Christianity as the foundation for certain beliefs or value systems.

The church building holds cultural and symbolic importance concerning the idea of vicarious religion. This is especially true and can be seen at times of great loss in a society, both locally

⁴² These surveys were conducted in 1991, 1998, and 2008. They were conducted by the Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste and financed by Norges forskningsråd. The surveys were then compiled by Norsk Gallup Institutt A/S (Repstad, 2010, p. 389).

and nationally. In Norway an example of this is the central, symbolic role that the Oslo Cathedral played in the commemorating of those that lost their lives on 22 July 2011 in the bombing in Oslo and shooting spree on Utøya. The Cathedral was a place that people came to find comfort as well as the place where people laid a sea of flowers to commemorate those that died. According to Oslo's bishop the number of people that visited the church in the year following the attack quadrupled in comparison to the average number of visitors (Kvarme, 2012).

This symbolic role of church building in Norwegian culture can also be demonstrated through cases of church fires. Debates have arisen concerning what type of church building was to be constructed in the burned building's place. Two examples are the Våler Church in Solør in 2009 and the Østre Porsgrunn church fire in 2011.⁴³ Both of these cases garnered media attention. In the case of the Østre Porsgrunn church there are two main groups that had differing opinions on what kind of church building was to be built. On the one side you had those who wanted to rebuild an exact copy of the old building (Lombardo, 2010). Lombardo argued that the church building is a unique aspect of cultural heritage that needed to be protected and recreated. He described how he felt that it was sad that this was even up for discussion. He describes how in Italy when old churches are damaged there is no discussion around what kind of building is going to be built, they always try to recreate a copy of the original. On the other side of the debate you had a group of people that had the desire to build a new, modern styled church building (Danielsen, 2014). Their reasoning being that the old church building was very expensive to maintain and operate, as well as not having room for all the modern day functions of the church. With a newly designed building they could design it to fulfill all the needs of a modern congregation.

This debate in Østre Porsgrunn can be looked at from the perspective of vicarious religion and the symbolic importance of the church building that is discussed in this theory. The first group of people, those that want to rebuild a copy of the original, can potentially be described as those that are not active members in a congregation but look at the church building as an

⁴³ For more information concerning these two church fires and the debates that followed, refer to these newspaper articles: Wålberg, K. I. (2010, January 12) Ønsker statsråd-hjelp til Kirkebrann saken. *Glåmdalen*. Retrieved 10.02.14 through Atekst.; Holbek, J. A. (2011, September 14) Kirkebrann utløste valgkamp. *Vårt Land*. Retrieved 10.02.14 through Atekst.

aspect of their cultural history that they are trying to defend. On the other side you have those, that want to build a modern church building. They are most likely active members in the congregation and want a building that will help them to do their work in the church and have the potential for growth.

Even if the appearance of organized religion and Christianity is changing in Norway there is still the connection to the past and to the cultural heritage of Christianity. This cultural heritage tie is one of the most important and has implications politically, socially and culturally. It will continue to be included in Norway's heritage as long as people decide to keep it and do not actively "forget" it.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

In this section I have provided theoretical background information concerning the aspects of the relationship between the media and society. This relationship contains a number of dynamics that can contribute to the Norwegian cultural identity.

This was followed by an in-depth description of varied aspects of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity. One of the terms that I label this with is Norwegianness. I looked at the formation of Norwegian cultural identity through the perspective provided in the theory of cultural memory, which is a process of actively "remembering" and "forgetting" memories or aspects from the past. The memories and ideas from the past that a culture wants to hold on to are remembered and reformed to fit the image that they want to portray in the present.

Following this description I described peacefulness and the premier place that it holds in the Norwegian cultural identity.

Kulturarv or cultural heritage was then looked at as a further descriptive component of this identity. It was something that citizens can unite under and use to understand themselves. I gave further descriptions of a rural and a Christian cultural heritage. The studies of Iversen and Andreassen showed how Christianity has been used in the Norwegian religious education curriculum to support Norwegian cultural heritage. I also looked at the theory of vicarious

religion as described by Grace Davie. This theory can be used to potentially grasp how religion is operating in present day Norway.

3. Warrior Culture

“The warrior figure transcends time and place. In one manifestation or another, the warrior has been an essential element in societies throughout history and on all parts of the globe” (Calahan, 2002, p. 3). This quote shows the important place that warriors have held in societies throughout history. They defended the civilian population as well as fought to expand the territory or influence of the leader that they fought under. The types of attitudes, code of conduct, and the way that these soldiers lived their lives can be described as a warrior culture (Calahan, 2002). The term *warrior culture* can also be used to describe attitudes and actions which focus on violence and brutality in battle.

In the modern Norwegian context the idea of a *krigerkultur* or warrior culture does not have a strong tradition and is an idea that many do not want to include in the Norwegian cultural identity. The one group that does come to mind in Norwegian history concerning warriors is the Vikings. In this “to Valhall” debate the idea of a warrior culture was used to describe the actions and attitudes of the professional soldiers that were found in the Telemark Battalion, Mek 4 company. As will be evident in this thesis, the use of the Vikings and a warrior culture as sources of cultural identity is complicated and at times controversial in the Norwegian context.

In this section I will be analyzing how the idea of a *warrior culture* was described in the “to Valhall” debate. I will start with a chronological list of the media coverage concerning the varied uses of this term in the newspaper articles from 2010-2011. As I read through the source materials I found that this term occurred very often and was prescribed various meanings when used by different people, I will describe two of these main uses. I will also conduct an analysis concerning the images of soldiers that were portrayed in my source material. I call this the use of the “American other” due to the fact that qualities of American soldiers were compared in numerous places with those of their Norwegian counterparts.

3.1 Media Coverage of Warrior Culture

The time period that I focus on in my analysis is the two year period of 2010-2011. As I looked into the articles from this time period I found that there were references to another

debate in the media concerning a *warrior culture* in the Norwegian military that happened in 2008-2009.⁴⁴ I will begin with describing aspects of this 2008-2009 debate that provide some background information concerning the warrior culture discussed in 2010-2011.

3.1.1 Warrior Culture: 2008-2009

This 2008-2009 debate contained articles and discussions about the missions and work that Norwegian soldiers were conducting in Afghanistan. Sverre Diesen, former head of the Norwegian Armed Forces, is credited with introducing the idea of a warrior culture in the Norwegian context. Diesen believed that this warrior culture was needed in tandem with the professional soldiers from the Telemark Battalion and the type of missions that were expected of them (Diesen, 2008).

Two of the main people that contributed to this 2008-2009 debate were Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen, former Minister of Defense and Janne Haaland Matlary, former state secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Christian Democratic Party. Matlary criticized Strøm-Erichsen as well as other politicians and media for the way that they were portraying the efforts of Norwegian soldiers that were deployed to Afghanistan.⁴⁵ She believed that the soldiers should receive more recognition for the service that they were doing for Norway. Strøm-Erichsen defended herself by saying that she does support the troops, but that there needs to be more focus on ethics and the attitudes that they are expressing. The actions and attitudes mentioned in these articles are described as being part of a warrior culture. Strøm-Erichsen believes that there is no tradition for a warrior culture in Norway and therefore there is no need to celebrate victories in war (Strøm-Erichsen, 2008b). This 2008-2009 debate provides context concerning the theme of a warrior culture in the Norwegian military and their mission in Afghanistan.

⁴⁴ I separate these two media debates 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 because there were different factors that started and drove the individual debates in these two different time periods. Examples of these different factors are the three inciting incidents that I mention in the introduction.

⁴⁵ Matlary, J. H. (2008a, November 6) Jobb på liv og død. *VG.*; Strøm-Erichsen, A. G. (2008a, November 17) Norsk krigsinnsats. *VG.*; Matlary, J. H. (2008b, November 23) Kriger i kamuflasje? *VG.*; Strøm-Erichsen, A. G. (2008b, November 27) Vi Feirer ikke. *VG.*

3.1.2 Media Coverage of Warrior Culture: 2010-2011

In 2010 these similar themes of a warrior culture were brought up again in the “to Valhall” debate. This time there were the added dimensions of quotes saying that war is better than sex and battle cries of “to Valhall”. These actions are portrayed as controversial and are described as being part of an *ukultur*. This Norwegian term *ukultur* was used to say that these actions went against what is accepted in Norwegian culture and that they did not fit with accepted Norwegian norms.

In a DagenMagazinet article Johannes Kleppa writes about how Alf Petter Hagesæther, the head of the military chaplain corps at the time, was concerned with a number of actions and attitudes being displayed by members of the Telemark Battalion. He described these actions as part of a warrior culture that has its foundation in pre-Christian Norse mythology and that they go against the military’s foundational values. This article from Kleppa was from April 2010 and was one of the first articles that showed concern for this warrior culture. The debate gained momentum and received more coverage in late September and October of 2010 (Kleppa, 2010).

On September 27, 2010 Frithjof Jacobsen writes in VG that he does not believe that quotes comparing war or combat to sex from these Telemark Battalion soldiers, have anything to do with a warrior culture. He believes that it is more an issue of soldiers that are put in a tough situation and are asked to make difficult decisions. He also believes that there needs to be more understanding from the civil population that war is an arena that is filled with violence. He believes that battle cries should be looked at in the context of this. Jacobsen stated that the battle cries are possibly a way that young soldiers get in the mindset that is needed before going into a combat situation. Even with all this understanding, he still believes that this *ukultur* needs to be “pulled out by the roots as fast as possible”⁴⁶ (Jacobsen, 2010, p. 11).

There were a variety of military and political leaders that voiced their opinions concerning this alleged warrior culture. The two most vocal were Harald Sunde and Grete Faremo.⁴⁷ In

⁴⁶ “må rykkes opp med roten så fort som mulig”

⁴⁷ Former Head of the Armed Forces (2009-2013) and Former Minister of Defense (2008-2011).

an article from Agderposten, this warrior culture is described as one that is unacceptable. Faremo specifically describes it as an issue with attitudes, ethics, and leadership. Faremo states in this article that she “reacts very strongly to attitudes that distance them from society’s values and the goal of the mission”⁴⁸ (NTB, 2010b, p. 15). Sunde adds that this warrior culture creates doubt in the mind of Norwegians concerning the military’s ethics and attitudes, as well as destroying their creditability. These same concerns are also expressed in several other articles listed in this footnote.⁴⁹

Faremo compares these actions of the Mek 4 soldiers to controversial events that happened in Denmark concerning a controversial film created about Danish soldiers in Afghanistan, entitled *Armadillo*. Faremo compares the “to Valhall” debate in Norway to this Danish one by says “we have got our Armadillo on paper”⁵⁰ (Christiansen, 2010, p. 17). *Armadillo* received international acclaim as well as causing uproar in the Danish media (Macnab, 2010)⁵¹. Both the actions of the Telemark Battalion that are written about in the Alfa article and the actions of Danish soldier shown in the film were not received well in their home countries, and both received large amounts of media coverage.⁵²

One quote that strongly ties together the Norwegian and Danish debates was found in an article from the British newspaper *The Guardian*. It stated: “The notion that the Danes are in Afghanistan on a peacekeeping mission and spend their days building schools and “giving out candy to kids” is clearly no longer tenable” (Macnab, 2010). Another article from *The Telegraph* had a quote from a well known Danish author, Carsten Jensen. He said “The Danish self-image was smashed in Armadillo. After [this film] it will not be possible to talk

⁴⁸ “Jeg reagerer meget sterkt på holdninger som fjerner seg fra samfunnets verdier og oppdragets mål”.

⁴⁹ Christensen, P. (2010, September 29) Forsvaret vil luke ut krigsrusen. *Telemarksavisa.*; Bredeveien, J. M. (2010b, October 1) Streng omsorg. *Morgenbladet*.

⁵⁰ “Vi har fått vårt Armadillo på papir”

⁵¹ The film was directed by Janus Metz and premiered at the Cannes film festival in 2010. According to the director, the film had been the subject of 300-400 articles in Danish newspapers at that time. The film depicts Danish soldiers in Afghanistan that are excited after killing their enemies. The public reacted to the large amounts of violence that Metz showed. Some were even concerned that the soldiers had broken the rules of engagement. Politicians and senior members of military leadership commissioned inquiries into the controversial events that are displayed in this film (Macnab, 2010).

⁵² One example of the types of actions that were looked at negatively from *Armadillo* was soldiers describing how exhilarating it was to kill their enemy in battle. One quote stated that they “liquidated wounded people and piled up the dead to take pictures of ourselves as heroes” (Macnab, 2010). Another example was suggestions that the soldiers had possible broke the rules of engagement by killing members of the Taliban that were trying to surrender to them or were already wounded (Gritten, 2011).

about Afghanistan in the same way as before. Nor will it be possible to look at us Danes in the same way. It is an earthquake in the nation's self-understanding" (Gritten, 2011). The ideas shown in these quotes are very similar to the sentiments expressed in the Norwegian media concerning the actions of the Mek 4 soldiers. They also show that the reasons for why the debates started in both countries were similar.

In a VG Nett article from September 28, 2010 Hagesæther makes a comparison of these Telemark Battalion actions to those of a Nazi soldier. He describes this connection through a story from WWII, where a Nazi fighter pilot runs out of ammunition so he decides to crash his plane into an enemy target. His last words, yelled over the radio, were: "see you in Valhall". (Ege, Hegvik, Andersen, & Johansen, 2010a). He believes that this reference to "Valhall" can cause connections to be made between these two groups of soldiers. He says that he does not believe that these soldiers have Neo-Nazi connections, but that "with the use of this expression, a direct line is drawn to the Nazi use of the word"⁵³ (Ege et al., 2010a).

On September 28, 2010, VG's front page showed a Norwegian soldier with a headline reading "Norwegian Major in Afghanistan: Condemned for Viking Behavior".⁵⁴ In the picture the soldier is wearing a Viking helmet and doing what is commonly referred to as a "rock-on" hand signal. He is also wearing a Punisher skull patch on his chest. The article that accompanied this front page picture states that this man is named Rune Wenneberg. He is described as the man allegedly behind this warrior culture in the Telemark Battalion, according to various top military leaders. This article also describes Wenneberg as the leader of the troops that are quoted in the Alfa magazine article. The picture is defended in the article by a Norwegian military officer, Knut Fredheim, who states that the picture was just for fun and that nothing more should be read into it. Wenneberg is continually labeled the leader of this warrior culture (Andersen, Ege, Hegvik, & Johansen, 2010).⁵⁵

⁵³ "Ved å bruke det uttrykket, dras en direkte linje til nazismens bruk av ordet"

⁵⁴ Picture found in Appendix A. Original Norwegian "Norsk Major i Afghanistan: Fordømmes for Vikingadferd.

⁵⁵ This labeling of Wenneberg can be found in the following articles: Haug, K. (2010, September 29) Bli kalt << vår tids vikinger >>. *Klassekampen.*; Gilbrant, J. (2010, October 8) Vi vinket og smilte til << Jokkes >> mordere omstridt offiser. *Dagbladet.*

In response to many of these negative portrayals of a warrior culture, a number of soldiers spoke out in the media against the allegations and descriptions that were being made against them as a group. In an article in *Dagbladet*, Jørgen Meberg Gilbrant writes about two soldiers who do not agree with how they and their fellow soldiers were being portrayed. This includes what is written about their leader, Wenneberg. The two soldiers in this article said that the picture of Wenneberg looked bad because it was taken out of context. They believe that this is also true of the video of their company partaking in the battle cry of “to Valhall”. They say that it shows only 15-20 seconds of a ten minute long speech that Wenneberg gave.⁵⁶ In this more complete version of the speech, Wenneberg reportedly motivates the soldiers in a positive way and tells them to prioritize the safety of civilians above all else (Gilbrant, 2010b). There are other articles which describe soldiers that support Wenneberg and speak out against the negative descriptions given of the warrior culture, they can be found in this footnote.⁵⁷

In a *Morgenbladet* article from October 10, 2010 a description is given of how Sverre Diesen stated in 2008 that there was going to be a need for a “new warrior culture”.⁵⁸ This was due to Norway having to restructure their military from one that is focused on territorial defense to one that also required professional, elite soldiers that could be sent on foreign missions. Missions that are most commonly associated with the work of NATO. Diesen believes that these new missions require new motivation. Diesen says that this motivation includes amplified aspects of camaraderie and a family feeling. These different aspects will help the soldiers build the bond needed to be successful when working as professional soldiers (Bredeveien, 2010a).

⁵⁶ This shorter version, which only contains the battle cry, is what is seen in the videos on YouTube, *Dagbladet*, and in the NRK documentary.

⁵⁷ Bredeveien, J. M. (2010a, October 1) En gang var vi krigere. *Morgenbladet*. In this article it describes how Wenneberg built up a “family feeling” in his company and that his men have defended him and called him the best leader that they have had. Also that he always took care of his men and built a “good environment both academically and socially”. It uses Diesen’s explanation of a warrior culture that is designed to help as a motivating factor in foreign operations that professional soldiers take part in. Other examples of this found in: Anwar, K. (2010, October 2) Til Valhall! *Aftenposten*.; Kvaale V. K. & Gilbrant, J. M. (2010, September 28) Til Valhall! Norsk offiser hisser til kamp mot Taliban. *Dagbladet*. Sæther, J. M. (2010a, December 24) Fra krig til julefred. *Dagsavisen*.

⁵⁸ This was from an article of Diesen’s that was published on December 18, 2008, entitled Den Nye Krigerkulturen, *Aftenposten*.

Kamal Anwar, a former NATO/ISAF soldier also talks about how this warrior culture is needed in order to deal with the difficulties as well as find motivation in the operations that they are a part of in Afghanistan. He agrees with Diesen that it is a culture that brings the soldiers together to deal with the job at hand and gives extra motivation (Anwar, 2010). This motivating and binding use of warrior culture does not come up that often, but it can still be found in a number of other articles.⁵⁹

As mentioned above, Sverre Diesen introduced the use of the term warrior culture. In an article from *Morgenbladet* an interview was conducted with Diesen concerning this warrior culture and other military themes (Gravdal, 2011). He describes how a warrior culture needs to include new rituals, symbols, memorials, etc., that help it to form and give it a foundation. For him one of the main factors is motivation. He states that these professional soldiers in the Telemark Battalion do not sign up for a job in which they can potentially die because they are fighting for “political ideal objectives”⁶⁰ (Gravdal, 2011, p. 14), but because they are “willing to die for their fellow soldiers, company, the mission, and to not fail their friends”⁶¹ (Gravdal, 2011, p. 14). In this article he describes how this kind of culture and mindset is a fairly recent development in Norway, starting in the time following the Cold War.

In 2011 the warrior culture aspect of this debate gained new momentum. This was due to two main reasons. The first was the release of a book that gave an insider perspective on the group of soldiers at the center of this debate. There also were articles about a documentary that was going to be shown on NRK. In this documentary they were going to follow soldiers from the Telemark Battalion and show the job they have been doing in Afghanistan. This documentary visualized many of the aspects of this debate and brought them into the living rooms of the Norwegian people. Numerous articles were written both about the book and its author as well as the NRK documentary.

⁵⁹ Sæveraas, T. E. (2010, October 16) Brothers in Arms. *Klassekampen*.

Hetland, T. (2011, January 14) Frå verneplikt til krigarkultur. *Stavanger Aftenblad*.

⁶⁰ “politisk ideelle målsettinger”

⁶¹ “villige til å dø for medsoldaten, avdelingen, for oppdraget og for ikke å svikte kameratene”

An article in Dagbladet from April 4, 2011 had a headline that read “Last Year: Denigrated soldiers claimed that war was better than sex. This Year: Followed by a NRK-team”⁶² (Jonassen & Ottosen, 2011). This article describes how NRK created a documentary about Norwegian soldiers in Afghanistan entitled *Norway in War, Operation Afghanistan*.⁶³ It follows some of the same soldiers whose actions started this debate. The project leader for the documentary says that “the job the soldiers are doing is too important to not be shown”⁶⁴ (Jonassen & Ottosen, 2011). In another article from Dagbladet it describes the soldiers that would be presented in this documentary as the same soldiers that were chastised by Faremo because of what they had said in the Alfa article (Rasch, 2011). Other articles that reported more on this NRK documentary can be found in this footnote.⁶⁵

In August 2011 there were articles reporting that a new book was going to be released later that fall. Marie Kleve writes in Dagbladet, that it was to be entitled *Brothers in Blood*.⁶⁶ The author of the book remained anonymous in this article, due to the fact that they did not know what kind of affect it would have on their career in the military. The book is described as a “first hand account from a young soldier that has been in Afghanistan three times, totaling a stay of one year”⁶⁷ (Kleve, 2011, p.50). The publisher of the book hoped that it would create a new debate and inform the Norwegian public about an area that they should know more about. There were other articles that describe this book and its author, they can be found in this footnote.⁶⁸

An article in Aftenposten from November 9, 2011 reveals the identity of the author. His name is Emil Johansen and he is described as a “professional soldier and later officer in the Telemark Battalion”⁶⁹ (Bentzrød, 2011, p. 4-5). Johansen says that he wrote the book “to

⁶² “I fjor: Utskjelte soldater hevdet at krig var bedre enn sex. I år: Fulgt av NRK-team”

⁶³ “Norge i krig: Oppdrag Afghanistan”

⁶⁴ “jobben soldatene gjør er for viktig til å ikke bli vist”

⁶⁵ Semmingsen, I. (2011, April 13) Tett på norske soldater i krig. *Dagsavisen.*; Thoresen, L. (2011, October 7) Røverhistorier fra krigen. *Dagbladet*.

⁶⁶ “Brødre i blodet”

⁶⁷ “en førstehandsberetning fra en ung soldat som har vært i Afghanistan i tre omganger, som totalt utgjør et opphold på ett år”

⁶⁸ Stueland, E. (2011, December 3) Mellom soldater og sivile. *Klassekampen.*; Wiese, A. (2011, November 9) En norsk kriger Emil Johansen. *Dagbladet.*; Lerum, M. G. (2011, November 27) Forsvarskriegerens forsvarstale. *VG*.

⁶⁹ “profesjonell soldat og senere befal i Telemark bataljon”

create an understanding back home in Norway for what the Norwegian soldiers experience in Afghanistan”⁷⁰ (Bentzrød, 2011, p. 4-5). Johansen also mentions in the book his personal experience concerning the loss that he felt when Claes Joachim “Jokke” Olsson, his fellow soldier, was killed in battle. This article also mentions the quotes from soldiers in Johansen’s company that were in the Alfa magazine article, as well as the fact that Wenneberg “Major Valhall” was his commanding officer.

Hagesæther enters this media debate again in a Vårt Land article from 2011. He states that if this warrior culture continues to develop in the military, chaplains will need to have a role as a *corrective force*. He provides the following example of what he means by this. If this warrior culture begins to produce actions that, for example, go against human rights, the military chaplain corps need to speak out and be a moral compass. He believes that they should have this role due to the fact that they have the responsibility for ethics training. They also live in close contact with soldiers in the field and therefore he claims they have a better understanding of what they go through. He believes that this new responsibility will help the chaplain corps to play a more central role in the military in the future (Lindekleiv, 2011a).⁷¹

3.2 Uses of Warrior Culture

I observed the term or idea of a warrior culture being used in two main ways in this 2010-2011 media debate. In this section I will be describing these two uses as well as where they can be found in the source material. The ambiguity of this term can be seen as a possible explanation for the controversy and discussion that surrounded it in the media coverage.

The first use described the warrior culture as a negative subculture that had formed in parts of the military. This alleged subculture consisted of soldiers from the the Mek 4 company, who were portrayed as enjoying killing and the violence that they were experiencing in the war in Afghanistan. They were shown as soldiers that had attitudes that went against the values of the Norwegian military and Norwegian civil society. In this debate Rune Wenneberg was described as the leader of this negative warrior culture. He was credited with leading the

⁷⁰ “for å skape forståelse hjemme i Norge for hva norske soldater opplever i Afghanistan”

⁷¹ More ideas concerning these new military chaplain roles can be found her: Lindekleiv, H. M. (2011b, May 25) Moderne forsvar - nye feltprester. *Vårt Land*. Retrieved 05.02.14 through Atekst.

battle cry of “to Valhall”. This battle cry inspired the nickname of << Major Valhall >> to be given to him by the media.⁷² He is also the soldier that was on the front page of VG from September 28, 2010 wearing the Viking helmet.

The articles which describe the warrior culture in this negative way, point to the article from Alfa as containing prime examples of this subculture. This Alfa article was filled with violent descriptions of battle and the quotes including themes of sex. An example of a quote that many reacted to was, “you do not go to Afghanistan to save the world, but to be in a real war”⁷³ (NTB, 2010b). Grete Faremo and Harald Sunde, were two leaders that contributed to this negative perception and use of warrior culture. Faremo calls it an “unacceptable warrior culture that thrives best in the dark and wild, like a troll”⁷⁴ (NTB, 2010b). This subgroup was also referred to as a “Viking cult” in a Dagbladet article (Gilbrant, 2010b).

Another high ranking military officer that viewed warrior culture in this negative light was Lieutenant General Bernt Iver Ferdinand Brovold. His issue is mostly with the term itself, which he sees as too open and that many associate it with raw violence and wrongly used, unbounded military power. The term that he would rather use is *soldier culture*. He believes that with this term you can have soldiers who display military power and efficiency, while still being able to come out of an operation with “white gloves” (Løvland, Olsen, Rønne, Ravnaas, and Stordahl, 2010, p. 33). Another Norwegian General who wants to rename the idea of a warrior culture is Per Sverre Opedal. He states that he does not like Diesen's and Brovold's terms. He would prefer to use what he believes is a more neutral term, *professional culture*. He states that this term contains a “will to accomplish the mission, to strike hard if you have to. Not take personal revenge, but act based on Norwegian values”⁷⁵ (Olsen, 2009a).

⁷² Bentzrød, S. B. (2011, November 9) -Det kan høres ut som en barnslig guttelek, men det var blodig alvor. *Aftenposten*. Retrieved 09.12.13.; Simonsen, M. (2010, October 11) En vanlig dag i krigen, *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 08.01.14 through Atekst.

⁷³ “Man verver seg ikke til Afghanistan for å redde verden, men for å være med i en skikkelig krig”

⁷⁴ “uakseptabel krigerkultur trives best i mørket og vil, som trollet”

⁷⁵ “vilje til å løse oppdraget, til å slå hardt til hvis du må. Ikke ta personlig hevn, men handle ut fra norske verdier”

The second use of warrior culture that I found in my source material, was first presented by Sverre Diesen. Diesen was Chief of Defense of Norway during the time period prior to this debate.⁷⁶ He describes how a warrior culture was needed in association with the formation of professional or career soldiers in the Norwegian Armed Forces. The same kind of soldiers that are in the Telemark Battalion. Diesen states that this new culture needed to be formed because there are different roles that are required of professional soldiers serving in international operations compared to those serving as conscripts for a short period of time. These new roles needed new attitudes and forms of motivation (Bredeveien, 2010a).

Diesen believes that there are two main characteristics that need to be present in his description of a warrior culture. These are wanting to fight for the man next to you and camaraderie with your fellow soldiers (Gravdal, 2011). Enjoying and being interested in the type of training and work that is done in the military is also listed as an important factor. He does admit that this “version” of a warrior culture has the potential of scandalous behavior, due to the type of work that is required of a soldier in war. The definition that Diesen is working with of warrior culture is interested in the professionalism, motivation, and camaraderie aspects, rather than the negative and violent descriptions of a subculture that were shown by leaders such as Faremo and Hagesæther.

Diesen’s view and definition of a warrior culture is one that is also shared by many of the individual soldiers that mentioned in various articles.⁷⁷ In an article from *Morgenbladet*, Bredeveien writes more about Diesen’s view of a warrior culture. He describes how Diesen wants it to have a “family feeling”. He believes that this “family feeling” is demonstrated by the young soldiers that have defended Wenneberg and described him as the best leader that they have had, one that always takes care of them (Bredeveien, 2010a).

One of these soldiers that is the most vocal in this debate concerning the idea of a warrior culture and also describes this family feeling is Emil Johansen. As mentioned previously his

⁷⁶ Chief of Defense of Norway from 2005-2009, Succeeded by Harald Sunde. (“Sverre Diesen”, n.d.)

⁷⁷ Gilbrant, J. M. (2010b, September 28) Vil gå i krigen for Wenneberg Norske soldater i Afghanistan. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 29.08.13 through Atekst.; Gilbrant, J. M. & Kvaale, V. K. (2010, September 28) Til Valhall! Norsk offiser hisser til kamp mot Taliban. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 29.08.13 through Atekst.; Anwar, K. (2010, October 2) Til Valhall! *Aftenposten*. Accessed 09.04.13 through Atekst.

story and views are described in his book *Brothers in Blood*. Specifically when it comes to the warrior culture, Johansen's definition focuses on battle knowledge and attitudes involved with being a soldier, as well as the kind of relationship that he believes is needed between soldiers in a division. He uses a variety of terms throughout the book that give an idea of what kind of relationship he had with his fellow soldiers. Examples of these are: *weapon brothers, warriors, soldier brothers, war brothers, brotherhood, and robust warriors*. This list exemplifies his approval and positive use of the term warrior culture. He agrees with Diesen that it is a vital part of professional divisions in the Norwegian Armed Forces. In the opening pages of his book Johansen gives background information about the Telemark Battalion and the role that a warrior culture plays in the Mechanized Infantry Company 4. Part of this description is written by Rune Wenneberg, who was one of Johansen's commanding officers. Wenneberg uses the term "our warrior culture..."⁷⁸ in his description. He lists six words that he believes are central to this warrior identity that he believes should be exemplified by members of this company. They are aggressive, independent, brave, proud, cooperative, and hardy (Johansen, 2012).

I have now presented the two main views of the term warrior culture in this media debate. The first portrayal was composed of negative descriptions. This negative focus was on actions that display violence and warriors that break with the values of Norwegian society. The second use focused on the term in reference to the motivational and camaraderie that is needed in a division of professional soldiers. These two views show the main contrasting ideas that emerged concerning the warrior culture component of the "to Valhall" debate from 2010-2011.

3.3 The "American Other"

The term the "American other" is one that I use to show a pattern I observed in these newspaper articles. I found that American references and specifically references to the American military were prevalent. They were often used in comparison to Norwegian soldiers. Using an object of comparison such as the "American other" is an example of a

⁷⁸ "Vår krigerkultur..."

strategy that can be used in identity formation. In this type of strategy you form your identity in comparison to the “other”, or what you are not.⁷⁹

In this section I will analyze two descriptions. These descriptions are of Norwegian soldiers and American soldiers as they are portrayed in the source material. The American military was not directly discussed in this debate, but they were used as a object of comparison concerning the actions and attitudes of Norwegian soldiers in the Telemark Battalion. I will start out by giving descriptive examples of this theme of an “American other” as they appeared in the media coverage. This will be followed by a detailed description of how American and Norwegian soldiers are portrayed in comparison to each other.

3.3.1 Media Coverage of the “American Other”

In the media debate from 2008-2009 that I have mentioned earlier, there are a couple of examples of the way that Norwegian soldiers are expected to act. These first examples from 2008-2009 give a foundation for themes and ideas that emerge in 2010-2011.

In an article from 2009, Olav Versto writes about the dilemma that Norway faces as a peaceful nation at war in Afghanistan. He states “It is no longer just something that they are doing in the old colonial powers of Great Britain and France or the superpower USA. We are also with them. We are waging war”⁸⁰ (Versto, 2009, p. 3). Norway is also described as “no longer the nicest boy in the UN class that does foreign relations with peaceful diplomats, aid workers, and missionaries”⁸¹ (Versto, 2009, p. 3). These quotes demonstrate the way that Versto sees Norway in an international context.

⁷⁹ This is the view of the Other as was presented by Emmanuel Levinas and expanded upon by Edward Said, among others. Further information can be found in these books: Levinas, E. (1999) *Totality and Infinity: an essay on exteriority*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press.; Said, E. W. (2003) *Orientalism*. London, England: Penguin Books.; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is credited as the person who has developed the idea as it is used presently: Spivak, G. C. (1985) Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (pp. 271-313). Basingstoke, England: MacMillan.

⁸⁰ “Dette er ikke lenger bare noe de driver med i gamle kolonimakter som Storbritannia og Frankrike eller i supermakten USA. Vi er med vi også. Vi fører krig”.

⁸¹ “ikke lenger den snilleste gutten i FN-klassen som driver utenrikspolitikk med fredsdiplomater, hjelpearbeidere og misjonærer”

In 2008-2009 there was an exchange of viewpoints in a series of articles between Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen and Janne Haaland Matlary as mentioned earlier. In one of these articles Strøm-Erichsen states that one thing that defines Norway is that it does not have a tradition for celebrating military victories. In Afghanistan this means that there should not be celebration when enemies (the Taliban) are killed in battle⁸² (Strøm-Erichsen, 2008b).

In response to these articles Tore Riise writes that he disagrees with Strøm-Erichsen on there being a lack of tradition for celebrating military victories.⁸³ Riise uses examples of Norwegian resistance fighters from WWII that are celebrated and respected for their service to Norway. Those men that fought against the Nazi occupation. He believes that in today's culture, Norwegian soldiers that come back from Afghanistan are met with silence and do not get recognition for the service they have given. Riise gives two examples from his personal life concerning this topic. These stories demonstrate how he believes Norwegian soldiers are perceived in society and the reception that they receive (Riise, 2008).

First, he describes that when he goes through the security check at Norwegian airports, and is in uniform returning from Afghanistan, he is checked extra close by the people working in security. He compares this to the USA where soldiers get to use a fast-track line when going through security and are in the priority line for boarding. He also experienced being allowed to go around security once in Germany because they were in a rush. He describes another story where he was on leave in Norway. He was walking down the street and a young girl spit on him, he is assuming due to the fact that she did not agree with the politicians decision to send Norwegian soldiers to war (Riise, 2008). These examples illustrate general modern day Norwegian sentiments towards warfare and the military.

Now I will be presenting examples of these Norwegian and American descriptions from 2010-2011. In an article from Morgenbladet February 19, 2010, John Berg contributes to this debate. Concerning the Norwegian military he brings up the example of the decision that had to be made concerning what kind of fighter jets Norway was going to purchase for the air

⁸² This is specifically in reference to controversy concerning Norwegian snipers who had been deployed in Afghanistan at this time.

⁸³ Riise was a former Norwegian soldier and member of the ISAF.

force. He states that in the end “we will have the planes that Cheney and Rumsfeld told us that we needed, for their form of war” (Berg, 2010). In this statement the ‘we’ is Norway and the ‘their form of war’ is in reference to the United States.⁸⁴

In an article from Aftenposten, Kamal Anwar, a former NATO/ISAF soldier, shares his opinions on this debate and the idea of a warrior culture in the Norwegian military. He focuses on how this warrior culture is perceived by the Norwegian people. He says that it is “a culture that the Norwegian people apparently did not know existed at all in the << nice >> military, in << nice >> Norway”⁸⁵ (Anwar, 2010, p. 4). He goes on to say that “skulls, the macho slogans, testosterone and the vulgar language was until recently only something that the Norwegian people arrogantly envisioned in films and TV series among << simpler >> American soldiers”⁸⁶ (Anwar, 2010, p. 4).⁸⁷

Controversies surrounding the American military are used as cautionary tales of what could happen in Norway. (Løvland, Olsen, Rønne, Ravnaas, & Stordahl, 2010). In a Morgenbladet article, Jo Moen Bredeveien talks about how actions and attitudes in the past concerning American soldiers have led to serious consequences and that this needs to be considered in this debate. He mentions for example the actions of the soldiers who were involved in the torture of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.⁸⁸ He states that in this situation the American soldiers went way over the line and that it is just one example of tragedies that can happen when soldiers have bad attitudes and carry out these kind of actions⁸⁹ (Bredeveien, 2010b).

⁸⁴ Dick Cheney was the Vice President and Donald Rumsfeld was the Secretary of Defense, both under the George W. Bush administration.

⁸⁵ “En kultur som det norske folk tilsynelatende ikke visste eksisterte i det hele tatt innenfor det << snille >> Forsvaret i << snille >> Norge”.

⁸⁶ “Hodeskallene, de macho slagordene, testosteronet og den vulgære munnbruken var inntil nylig kun noe norske folk arrogant så for seg i filmer og serier blant << enklere >> amerikanske soldater”.

⁸⁷ Another reference to these images of American soldiers being influenced by TV and movies can be found in this article: Simonsen, M. (2010, October 11) En vanlig dag i krigen. *Dagbladet*.

⁸⁸ This is referring to events at the American military prison at Abu Ghraib. Prisoners were tortured and humiliated and the American military guards took pictures of the abuses (Hersh, 2004).

⁸⁹ This reference to Abu Ghraib is also made in an article from VG, 27.09.10 entitled Dødninghoder. In this article a military chaplain named Hagesæther shows concern for attitudes found in the the Telemark Battalion that he believes can lead to events that are similar to Abu Ghraib (Ege et al., 2010a).

In an article in *Ukeavisen Ledelse*, Magne Lerø discusses how the politicians in Norway tried to give the impression that Norway was not participating in an actual war in Afghanistan. He describes the attitudes of the politicians by saying, “we [Norway] were there to help and create peace. It was the Americans that are waging war”⁹⁰ (Lerø, 2010, p. 2). He believes that the actions displayed in this debate have gone against the roles that many place the American and Norwegians in. The Americans as the “ugly warriors” and Norwegians as “nice helpers”. According to these descriptions there are supposed to be distinctive differences. Lerø believes that if you look at the descriptions of how these Norwegian soldiers are acting and the attitudes they have, it is very difficult to see this distinctive difference. He also believes that the Norwegian Armed Forces should stop the use of Norse mythology in all forms.⁹¹ According to him this will help to promote more healthy attitudes (Lerø, 2010).

The theme of Norwegian civil society not understanding what kind of mission the Norwegian military, and other international forces, have in Afghanistan was found in various articles. In an interview in *Dagsavisen*, a soldier named Kristian says that when he looks at articles and comments that people leave online concerning military action in Afghanistan he feels that people do not know what they are talking about. He says “it seems that a lot of people think that the mission is a big conspiracy - that the USA are just looking to steal oil”⁹² (Sæther, 2010a, p. 37).

3.3.2 Portrayals of American and Norwegian soldiers

Now that I have presented the media coverage of Norwegian and American soldiers from the source material, I will be providing a detailed description of how both groups of soldiers were portrayed. I will start with the American soldiers and follow that by the Norwegian description.

American soldiers and the United States in general are described in various ways and are attributed some generalized qualities. A couple of these qualities or descriptions are “ugly

⁹⁰ “Vi var der for å hjelpe og skape fred. Det var amerikanerne som kriger”

⁹¹ Examples of the Norwegian Armed Forces use of these Norse and Viking terms can be found in this article: Haug, K. (2010, September 29) Bli kalt << vår tids vikinger >>. *Klassekampen*. p. 6. Retrieved 30.08.13 through Atekst.

⁹² “det virker som om mange tror at oppdraget er en stor konspirasjon - at USA bare er ute etter å stjele olje”

warriors” (Lerø, 2010) and a superpower that wages war (Versto, 2009). In the article about the purchase of fighter jets, it describes how the Norwegian government bought the planes that it was “told to buy” by the Americans to fight “their type” of war (Berg, 2010). This shows that Berg believed that there is something intrinsically different about the way that Norway and the United States conduct themselves in war. As well as the way that their soldiers act and the character that they display to the rest of the world.

In the article where interviews were conducted with Norwegian soldiers after they had served in Afghanistan, one soldier expressed the opinion that many Norwegians thought that the US was there to steal oil (Sæther, 2010a). They are also described as being “simple” (Anwar, 2010) and less educated (Berg, 2010). Anwar says that this comes from the image that many get from films and TV series portraying American soldiers. American interests are also named as the main, and in most cases the only thing, that their military is concerned about protecting (Berg, 2010). Lastly, American soldiers are associated with the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib (Bredeveien, 2010b).

An image of Norwegian soldiers is also portrayed in this collection of newspaper articles. They are described as “nice” (Anwar, 2010) and “nice helpers” (Lerø, 2010). According to former Ministers of Defense they also do not have a tradition for celebrating military victories (Strøm-Erihsen, 2008b). When it comes to the work that they are doing in Afghanistan they are perceived as having honorable goals and are working to make that country a better place (Berg, 2010). They are not there to wage war, but to help with peacekeeping and humanitarian causes, such as building schools and securing rights for women and girls. Norway is also described as being the “nicest boy in the UN class that conducts foreign affairs with peaceful diplomats, aid workers, and missionaries” (Versto, 2009) or as I remember a professor I had who described Norway as the “boy scouts of the world”. It can also be interpreted that the Norwegian soldiers are smarter and more advanced, in comparison to the “simple” Americans (Anwar, 2010).

Professional soldiers, like the ones found in the Telemark Battalion, are at times not viewed positively by many Norwegians. They associate the role of a professional soldier with the

negatively charged term and profession of *mercenary*. This is possibly why there was more focus on the negative descriptions of this warrior culture. These enlisted soldiers are described as being “special types of people” and are looked at as bad people (Ulriksen, 2002). Whereas conscripts are viewed as young men that are fulfilling an obligation that they have for their country. This time in their life is described as a place where men from all parts of the country and levels in society work together. A kind of project in integration and nation building (Hetland, 2011).

The way that soldiers are received when they come home from war, can be an indicator of the attitudes that a civilian population has towards its military. In an article from Norges Forsvar, Dag Tangen Olsen interviewed General Major Per Sverre Opedal about warrior culture in the Norwegian military. In this interview Opedal says that “when soldiers come home they do not expect that people will pat them on the back and buy them a beer”⁹³ (Olsen, 2009a). In another article from Nationen, Haakon Barstad interviews Emil Johansen, author of *Brothers in Blood*, about similar topics. He asked Johansen how he believed that Norwegian civilians look at the work that he and his fellow soldiers do in Afghanistan. Johansen states that “there is not a red carpet, confetti and music corps when we land at Gardermoen”⁹⁴ (Barstad, 2011).⁹⁵ In the article from Barstad he goes further to say that this kind of reception was not needed, it was not the thing that should motivate a professional soldier. In comparison this kind of homecoming reception is almost expected in the United States when soldiers are returning from deployment.

3.4 Concluding Remarks

In this section I have analyzed the theme of a warrior culture that was found in the articles from 2010-2011. First I listed the references to this theme that were found in the source material. This was followed by the two main uses and forms that the theme of a warrior culture took. After this I looked at the idea of an “American other”, used as an object of comparison, in contrast to the Norwegian soldiers. This included media coverage detailed descriptions of both American and Norwegian soldiers that were found. The attributes of the

⁹³ “Når soldatene kommer hjem venter de ikke at folk skal slå dem på ryggen og spandere pils”

⁹⁴ “Det er ikke rød løper, konfetti og musikkorps når vi lander på Gardermoen”

⁹⁵ Gardermoen is the main airport in Oslo.

American soldiers were shown as something that Norwegian soldiers were not “supposed” to be.

In this debate the controversial idea of a warrior culture was used very often, but the meaning and intention behind the use was not always clarified. The impression that I believe most readers of these articles got of this term was that it had a very negative connotation, as is linked to my first description. It is displayed as something that should not be encouraged, should be squelched by those in military and political command, and goes against the foundational values of the Norwegian people. These are all ideas that will be touched on in the discussion.

4. Norse mythology and Viking symbolism

The period of the Vikings was between 750/800 and 1050. During this time Norse mythology was the folk religion practiced. In present day Norway there is a cultural memory that incorporates references to Norse mythology and the Vikings. These references are abundant in Norwegian popular culture.⁹⁶ In many cases it is a connection to the past that Norwegians and other Scandinavians are proud of, it is where many find their roots ("NRK - Arkeologene: Vikingen - superhelt og bonde", n.d.). On the other hand, as is seen in the "to Valhall" debate, there are certain aspects or references commonly associated with the Vikings that many would like to leave in the past. Example of these being actual belief in Norse mythology, warfare, and violence. Certain aspects and references to Norse mythology and the Vikings are accepted, while others are rejected. The Norse and Viking theme in the modern Norwegian context includes aspects that can be used for both creative purposes, as well as aspects that are viewed as threatening to a conceived Norwegian cultural identity in the modern world, and in this lies the dilemma.

In this section I will begin by giving a description of how "Valhall" was specifically used. These references were found in battle cries used by soldiers in the Telemark Battalion, as they are mentioned in my source material. This will be followed by a chronological presentation of Norse mythology and Viking symbolism as it was covered in the media. After the chronological presentation I will give a thematically organized analysis of these Norse and Viking references. I concentrate on the themes: dealing with death, motivation, and a company identity. I will also be looking at an article that stood out to me as an exceptional case. This article gives another perspective on the uses of Norse and Viking references in this context.

4.1 "To Valhall"

In this media debate the main Norse mythology/Viking reference is to *Valhall* (described in chapter 1.4.4). This reference to Valhall was incorporated into two variations of a battle cry.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ For example, fans wearing plastic Viking helmets with horns at football games with and the abundance of Viking themed gifts at tourists stores.

⁹⁷ There is the possibility that there are more, but these were the two that were referenced to in the newspaper articles.

The media coverage of these battle cries were an inciting event that helped start this media debate. These battle cry variations are depicted in videos that were found on Dagbladet's website⁹⁸ as well as on Youtube. The first variation was: "To Valhall! Orrah! To Valhall! Orrah! To Valhall! Orrah!"⁹⁹ (Bentzrød, 2011). The second variation was "you are the predators, the Taliban is the prey, to Valhall! Orrah! To Valhall! Orrah! To Valhall! Orrah!"¹⁰⁰ (Gilbrant & Kvaale, 2010).¹⁰¹ The battle cries can also be seen in the NRK documentary *Norway in War - Operation Afghanistan*. In this mediated debate I found that the Telemark Battalion soldiers are described as using these battle cries in different ways and I will describe these varied uses through a thematic analysis.

4.2 Media Coverage of Norse Mythology and Viking Symbolism

In this section I will provide a chronologically description of Norse mythology and Viking symbolism references that are found in my source material from 2010-2011.

One of the first mentions of "to Valhall" was in a Dagbladet article from January 29, 2010. This article was about the death of a Norwegian soldier in Afghanistan, Claes Joachim "Jokke" Olsson as has been previously described. He was a member of the Telemark Battalion and the Mek 4 division. In this article one of Jokke's fellow soldiers says that he wants to send out a greeting in memory of Jokke. This greeting was "To Valhall, Jokke! We will not forget you"¹⁰² (Hustadnes, 2010).¹⁰³ The soldier explains that when they go out as a company on missions the commander yells "to Valhall" as a way of motivating them before they head out on a mission. He describes this battle cry as their essence and what gives them

⁹⁸ The Dagbladet video can be found at this link: <http://www.dagbladet.no/2010/09/28/nyheter/forsvaret/innenriks/13590682/>. (Gilbrant, Kvaale, & Sandli, 2010).

⁹⁹ The YouTube video for this variation can be found here: ("Til Valhall - Norwegian Soldiers Battle Cry", uploaded 05.05.11), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYy7a8Fhb1w>. Accessed 06.03.14.

¹⁰⁰ Original Norwegian: "Dere er rovdyyret, Taliban er byttet. Til Valhall! Orrah! Til Valhall! Orrah! Til Valhall! Orrah!"

¹⁰¹ The YouTube video can be found at the following links: ("Til Valhall", uploaded 28.09.10) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxOSqSUgNzE>. Accessed 17.02.14.; (Norwegian Soldiers War Cry - Til Valhall", uploaded 28.09.10) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5uQcU92x2o>. Accessed 06.03.14.; ("Norwegian Soldiers War Cry in Afghanistan - "Til Valhall" (To Valhall)", uploaded 01.06.13) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qP9EaPa8dg>. Accessed 06.03.14.

¹⁰² "Til Valhall. Jokke! Vi skal ikke glemme deg!"

¹⁰³ This greeting from a fellow soldier is also found in an article from 12.02.10 Reinertsen, M. (2010, February 12) Krigere uten krig. *Morgenbladet*.

cohesion as a group. He goes on to say that Valhall is the place the soldiers who died in battle went according to Norse mythology.

In an article in DagenMagazinet from April 12, 2010 the military chaplain Alf Petter Hagesæther believes that he can give a possible explanation for the Norse warrior ideology that was supposedly getting a foothold in the Telemark Battalion, displayed for example in this battle cry of “to Valhall” (Kleppa, 2010). He believes that they were possibly inspired by Norwegian Black Metal music. Hagesæther describes this music as often having “texts that convey Norse values and mythological performances that are in stark contrast to Christianity’s message”¹⁰⁴ (Kleppa, 2010, p. 10). He also believes that this battle cry goes against the Fundamental Values of the Armed Forces (Forsvarets Verdigrunnlag). He believes they should be following the values that are listed and described in this document, which are rooted in the “Christian and humanist cultural tradition”.¹⁰⁵

A few months went by before these events were covered heavily in the media again. It was not until September that the media coverage would start up again. In a VG article entitled “Misunderstood warrior culture”, Frithjof Jacobsen attempts to give perspective on the use of these battle cries that contain references to Valhall. He says that this “tough talk and mention of Valhall can be a way to get new soldiers in the mindset they need to be in order to survive”¹⁰⁶ (Jacobsen, 2010). He also says that this could be a way to protect the young soldiers. Even if these are possible explanations for these actions this author believes that these kind of comments are over the line and can lead to more severe issues, such as war crimes.

In September of 2010 an article was published in VG about the use of the Punisher Skull by members of the Telemark Battalion. This skull was allegedly used by the soldiers as an

¹⁰⁴ “tekstene formidler norrøne verdier og mytologiske forestillinger i sterk kontrast til kristendommens budskap”

¹⁰⁵ Hagesæther also voices these concerns in other articles such as Ege, Hegvik, Andersen, & Johansen (2010c, September 27) Dødninghoder sprayet på afghanske hus. *VG Nett.*; Ege et al., (2010a, September 28) Avviser nazi-koblinger i Telemark bataljon. *VG Nett.*
Original Norwegian: “kristen og humanistisk kulturtradisjon”

¹⁰⁶ “Tøft prat og taler om Valhall kan være en måte å få nye soldater inn i den sinnsstemningen de trenger å være i for å klare seg”.

unofficial company symbol. There were reports that they painted the symbol on the houses of alleged Taliban members as well as Afghans that were associated with them. Hagesæther expressed his concern for what he called a “subculture that violates the Military’s core values in parts of the Telemark Battalion”¹⁰⁷ (Ege, Hegvik, Andersen, & Johansen, 2010b, p. 8). He also describes the battle cry of “to Valhall” as a part of this subculture. The soldiers that Hagesæther are talking about are the same soldiers that are featured in the Alfa magazine article. Hagesæther was not the only person in leadership that was concerned. In this article he says that he was informed about several other episodes, that could be considered a part of this subculture, by fellow military chaplains and officers. What Hagesæther is most concerned about is what these kind of actions represent and what can possibly emerge from them. He states that he took these events so seriously that he sent in a message of concern in May [2010] to the General Inspector of the Army concerning the episodes and attitudes of this subculture (Ege et al., 2010c).

The debate reached a climax in the end of September 2010. This was the time period when the most articles were written about these events. An article in VG states that those in leadership positions were showing concern for these excessive uses of Norse mythology in battle cries and symbols. Hagesæther believes that “it has evolved into worrisome subculture that breaks with the Armed Forces core values, in parts of the Telemark Battalion”¹⁰⁸ (Ege et al., 2010c). This article also reiterates the idea that in the Telemark Battalion this battle cry of “to Valhall” was used to motivate the soldiers before battle.

As mentioned previously in the warrior culture chapter, VG had a picture on their front page of a Norwegian soldier wearing a Viking helmet while doing a “rock-on” hand gesture and wearing the Punisher Skull patch on his chest. In the article it states that this soldier’s name is Rune Wenneberg and that he is a commander in the Telemark Battalion. He defends his use of the Viking helmet by saying that it was “just for fun” and that there is no deeper symbolism that is tied to its use. Wenneberg is also credited with the battle cry of “to Valhall” in this article. He defends this by saying that “all commanders have their own rituals and things like

¹⁰⁷ “subkultur som bryter med Forsvarets verdigrunnlag i deler av Telemark bataljon”

¹⁰⁸ “det har utviklet seg en bekymringsfull subkultur som bryter med Forsvarets verdigrunnlag i deler av Telemark bataljon”.

that, and the battle cry was one of mine. But I reject all suggestions that it has something to do with Black Metal, nationalistic or Nazi attitudes”¹⁰⁹ (Andersen et al., 2010). Wenneberg’s “to Valhall” battle cry is described as “ukultur” by the Defense Minister at the time Grete Faremo. Commander of the Armed Forces Harald Sunde also says that it is a “mockery of those that have given their life in Afghanistan”¹¹⁰ (Gilbrant, 2010a, p. 10). Throughout this debate Wenneberg is given the nickname of << Major Valhall >> due to the battle cry (Bentzrød, 2011).

In a Vårt Land article from September 29, 2010 the author focuses on the issue of evil and how it is often not discussed when it comes to the war in Afghanistan, even though it is such a present force. The article also discusses how the role of Norwegian soldiers has changed due to the international nature of the operations that they are participating in. When it comes to this new role there is also new motivation and a search for meaning in the type of work they are doing. In this case this took the form of symbols and battle cries that were tied to the Vikings to “communicate experiences of strife and battle”¹¹¹ (Lindekleiv, 2010, p. 6). The chaplain and ethics researcher, Paul Otto Brunstad, is interviewed in this article. He believes that the soldiers use the Viking reference because they do not have the terms needed to discuss evil in this setting of war. Brunstad provides a possible explanation for why the soldiers use the battle cry of Valhall to honor their fellow soldiers. He believes that it is the soldiers “looking to religious dimensions when they look for keys of interpretation concerning what they experience in the field”¹¹² (Lindekleiv, 2010, p. 6).

Another explanation that this article gives is that the Norse mythology references were easily available to the soldiers due to the fact that the Armed Forces uses Norse mythology names for buildings, vehicles, ships, and planes. In response to this the spokesperson for the head of the military at that time said that “it is a big leap from giving a ship a Norse name, to screaming << to Valhall >> to a friend that is lying on a stretcher”¹¹³ (Lindekleiv, 2010, p. 6).

¹⁰⁹ “Alle sjefer har sine ritualer og sånne ting, og kampropet var en av mine. Men jeg vil avvise alle antydninger om at dette har noe med black metal, nasjonalistiske eller nazistiske holdninger”

¹¹⁰ “er en hån mot de som har gitt sitt liv i Afghanistan”

¹¹¹ “for å kommunisere erfaringer av strid og kamphandlinger”

¹¹² “griper til religiøse dimensjoner når de søker fortolkningsnøkler for det de opplever i felten”

¹¹³ “Det er et stort sprang fra å gi et skip et norrønt nav, til å røpe << til Valhall >> ved båren til en kamerat”.

Brunstad also makes reference to the Nazi connection that can be made when Norse mythology is used in a military setting in Norway. He says that this type of Norse mythology reference can be a dangerous one to use because of the historical associations that it has with Quisling and the Nazis.

A Klassekampen article from September 29, 2010 pointed out the fact that the use of Viking symbols and names was not a new creation by this group of soldiers, but was something that the Norwegian Armed Forces itself had a history of. This article describes how the Telemark Battalion itself had used references to the Vikings in recruitment material and official material concerning the mission in Afghanistan. It stated that the work done in this battalion is a continuation of the Norwegian military history from the Viking times, with the Vikings being among the premier warriors of their time. It even called the members of the Telemark Battalion “the Norwegian Vikings of our time”¹¹⁴ (Haug, 2010, p. 6). The Telemark Battalion also had a Viking ship as their symbol and this comparison to the Vikings was used in recruitment materials between 2002 and 2009.¹¹⁵ In these materials it described how the Vikings were a small, select group of soldiers, much like the Telemark Battalion. There was another article that discuss the military using Norse mythology and Viking symbolism and it can be found in this footnote.¹¹⁶

There were two main media sources that displayed aspects of this Norse mythology and Viking symbolism that are mentioned in the articles from 2011. They are the NRK documentary *Norway in War, Operation Afghanistan* and the book *Brothers in Blood* by Emil Johansen. Articles concerning these media sources have already been described in the warrior culture chapter, but aspects concerning Norse mythology and Viking symbolism were also present in these articles.

¹¹⁴ “vår tids norske vinkinger”

¹¹⁵ Appendix B shows this Viking ship symbol which was used by the Telemark Battalion.

¹¹⁶ Melgård, M. (2010, September 30) Forsvaret inviterte allierte til Vikingfest i Irak, Viking-kultur i forsvaret. *Dagbladet*.

Johansen was described in an *Aftenposten* article as the person who was actually behind the battle cry of “to Valhall”.¹¹⁷ Up until this time Major Wenneberg was the person credited, or some would say blamed for creating the controversial battle cry. The cry of “to Valhall” was to be a response to the cry of “Orrah!”, which Johansen said was a phrase that Wenneberg had picked up during his education in the USA. He states that he got the inspiration to use Valhall from the fact that all the combat vehicles in the Telemark Battalion have names from Norse mythology. Johansen lists several ways that they used the battle cry. They were: to commemorate Jocke, get ready and in the right mindset for battle, and celebrate victory and the fact that they survived battle (Bentzrød, 2010).

4.3 Thematic Analysis

Through the process of qualitative document analysis I found different ways in which the battle cry of “to Valhall” and Norse/Viking symbols were used in the media coverage. There were three main themes that emerged to me as being the most important and most prevalent, they were: dealing with death, motivation, and a company identity. I will present these three themes and follow this presentation with an analysis of an article that was an exception in the source material. It contained different responses to these events and was beneficial to this debate, it therefore warrants extra focus.

4.3.1 Dealing with Death

The way that death is dealt with is one of the themes that emerges through the references that are made to Norse mythology and the Vikings. One of these references was the soldiers in the Telemark Battalion using their battle cry of “to Valhall” to commemorate and honor their fellow soldier Jocke before going out on missions. This battle cry has obvious components of death in the fact that according to Norse mythology, Valhall is the place that Viking warriors were taken by the Valkyries after they died in battle. The battle cry is used in a slightly different way when a soldier stated in one article that he wanted to send out the cry of “to Valhall” as a greeting to Jocke in his death (Hustadnes, 2010).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ This information is also found in Wiese, A. (2011, November 9) En norsk kriger Emil Johansen. *Dagbladet*.; Lerum, M. G. (2011, November 27) Forsvarskriegerens forsvarstale. *VG*.

¹¹⁸ The way that I interpreted this greeting was that he sent it to Jocke who was “in” Valhall now, since he was a warrior that died in battle.

There is one symbol that was described as being used by the Telemark Battalion that does not have a direct Norse or Viking reference, but still fits with this idea of dealing with death and was used to honor the dead. After Jokke's death his company created a patch containing a likeness of the "Punisher Skull" and text below it reading "Jokke - we will never forget".¹¹⁹ The image of a skull is commonly used to represent death. In this case they used a skull that was meant to look tough and dangerous, as it is the symbol that is used by a super hero who fights against evil in the world.¹²⁰ This is the same symbol that news reports say soldiers allegedly sprayed on Afghan houses to warn people who they believed were members or supporters of the Taliban.¹²¹

Jokke's fellow soldiers also honored him when a number of them traveled back to Norway from Afghanistan and visited his grave. In an article from VG (Andersen, Nilsen, Ege, Hegvik, & Johansen, 2010) it describes how the soldiers came to the grave and attached one of the Punisher Skull patches to his grave marker. Before they left it is reported that they joined together in a cry of "to Valhall". This visit to Jokke's gravesite was possibly a step in the grieving process for these soldiers. Connecting the Punisher skull patch and the battle cry of "to Valhall" were ways for them to mourn the death of their friend and brother in arms. This article portrayed this event in two different ways. The first was soldiers who were honoring their fellow soldier who had died in battle. The other portrayal was that these actions were part of a troubling subculture and were not accepted by military and political leadership.

In death many try to find meaning and understanding. This was demonstrated in a article that described soldiers who used the Norse mythology references in their battle cries to commemorate those that have died in battle (Lindekleiv, 2010). It also discusses how the soldiers used these types of references to communicate their experiences in battle. This same

¹¹⁹ Appendix C shows this Punisher Skull patch.

¹²⁰ *The Punisher* is a comic book character that was created for Marvel comics by John Romita, Gerry Conway, and Ross Andru ("Punisher", n.d.). He was a former United States Marine named Frank Castle who becomes a super hero after his family is killed by the mob. He is a vigilante that is fighting the mob to avenge his family's murder as well as finding other criminals and punishing them. He uses a black suit with a white skull on the chest. He is also described as dark and that he was fighting a one-man war against crime ("Punisher - Frank Castle", n.d.). An image of the comic book character the Punisher can be found in Appendix D.

¹²¹ (Ege et al., 2010b). Dødninghoder. *VG*.

article expresses the idea that the soldiers could be looking to Norse mythology as a religious dimension that will help them to understand what they have experienced in war (Lindekleiv, 2010). All of these examples demonstrate the searching that these soldiers were doing, trying to find understanding in the stressful and difficult situation that they were put in. As well as dealing with the death that was around them.

4.3.2 Motivation

One of the most common uses and purposes of a battle cry is to motivate soldiers that are going out to combat. This is commonly done right before a battle to get the soldiers in the right mind set and ready to go. In this media debate the battle cry of “to Valhall! Orrah!” is described by the soldiers themselves as a way they got motivated and in the right mindset for battle. They are put in life or death situations and for many a battle cry is needed to accomplish the goal ahead of them.¹²²

Kamal Anwar describes one source where he believes soldiers can get their motivation from. In the Norwegian context he says that you “play off your own tough culture - in the case of Norway this is of course the Viking times with its effects and slogans”¹²³ (Anwar, 2010, p. 4). For Anwar the use of Viking symbols and references were the first thing that came to his mind when he wanted to think of tough warriors that could be used as a motivational role model.

Rune Wenneberg is the man who is described as the leader of the warrior culture, the one who led the battle cry of “to Valhall”, and the man who was on the cover of VG wearing a Viking helmet. He defends his actions by saying that the individual commanders have their own rituals and that these Viking references were incorporated in his. (Andersen et al., 2010). This article shows an example of how a leader was trying to motivate his men, and just like Anwar, he needed a tough culture to get inspiration from. For Wenneberg the Vikings were the group that he also turned to.

¹²² Jacobsen, F. (2010, September 27) Misforstått krigerkultur. *VG*.

¹²³ “å spille på sin egen tøffe kultur - i Norges tilfelle så er dette selvfølgelig vikingtiden med sine effekter og slagord”

For those who showed concern for this Valhall reference in Norwegian battle cries, motivation was also used as a central reason to explain why it was “worrisome” and a component of an “ukultur”. The fact that soldiers said they were using Norse and Viking references as motivation before going out into battle was an issue for military and political leaders. They were worried that the Norwegian soldiers had negative attitudes and motivation when they went out to fight waving the Norwegian flag. With all of this the issue of values and references to “Norwegian values” occurred. Leaders such as Faremo, Sunde, and Hagesæther mention in a number of articles that these actions, which include references to Norse mythology, go against Norwegian values and the core values of the Norwegian Armed Forces (Forsvarets Verdigrunnlag).

4.3.3 Company Identity

Norse and Viking references were described as something that these soldiers in Mek 4 used as a component of their company identity. They used the battle cry and the Punisher skull as key elements in their company identity. It is what set them apart and gave them a sense of belonging.

Besides using the battle cry of “to Valhall” to motivate the soldiers before they went out on an operation, they used it to bring them together as a group. It is what provided them with cohesion as a group. In one of the first articles which covered the death of Claes Joachim Olsson, one of his fellow soldiers says that the battle cry was their “essence of unity”¹²⁴ (Hustadnes, 2010, p. 3) in their company. The use of the term *essence* shows that they believe that it is a defining factor for them as a group and holds great importance in the image they have of themselves as a company.

Wenneberg contributes to this definition of their company identity through his leadership role. In the article concerning his picture on the front page of VG, he states that the use of “to Valhall” was his personal way of motivating the men in his company. He describes how he brought them together through this use of Norse and Viking references. In the articles concerning Emil Johansen and his book it also discusses how these battle cries with Norse

¹²⁴ “det er essensen av samholdet”

and Viking references were what they used to show that they were united as a group before going out on a mission.

The Punisher skull was mentioned earlier as a way that the soldiers in this company dealt with death. It was also a symbol that they used to show their unity as a company. The patch was an outward symbol that they used to mark who was a member of this company. The spraying of the Punisher skull on buildings to warn the Taliban is also a way that they can show their company identity. When people were to see this skull painted on a building they would know who had been there. It was also mentioned that the skull was painted on a number of the vehicles that they used, once again an outward symbol of their belonging in this company (Ege et al., 2010c).

One last reference to this company identity can be found in the warrior culture chapter. Here two different uses of warrior culture from this media debate are described. In the second description attributes of a warrior culture are given by Sverre Diesen. One description that he gives which applies to this company identity is what he calls a “family feeling” (Bredeveien, 2010a). This company could be viewed as a type of family unit through the descriptions provided. He believes that in military units that comprise of professional soldiers it is especially important that they feel a sense of camaraderie and that they are a part of a family.

4.3.4 “Odin meg her og Odin meg der”

When it came to the Norse and Viking references, there was one article that stuck out as special and brought up some new themes. This article was in *Morgenbladet* and was printed in the October 15-21, 2010 issue. It was entitled “Odin meg her og Odin meg der”¹²⁵ by Ilham Hassan. Her main argument in the article is that Norway and Norwegians should stop using references to Odin and Norse mythology altogether because it does not hold a place in the modern, pluralistic Norwegian society.

She points out that examples of Norse mythology are very prevalent and that a type of “Vikingfication” has taken place in Norway. It is not only the soldiers in Afghanistan that

¹²⁵ A literal translation would be “Odin me here and Odin me there”.

were using Norse and Viking references. They can be seen in the names of oil platforms and if you go on the internet and type in odin.no it takes you to the Norwegian government's website.¹²⁶ Hassan believes that from a military point of view, soldiers that do not come from an ethnic Norwegian background will not be able to identify themselves with Norse and Viking references. If they cannot identify with these references, they cannot have a strong camaraderie based relationship with their fellow soldiers. Therefore they should be completely removed.

Hassan shares her opinions concerning the Norwegian soldiers in Afghanistan that were not found elsewhere in the media debate. She starts out the article saying that the soldiers are “playing vikings in Central Asia”¹²⁷ (Hassan, 2010). When Hassan describes the soldiers as “playing”, this can be perceived as her belief that they are not taking the missions seriously in Afghanistan. It could also mean that she does not approve of Norway's involvement in the conflict. When it comes to war she states that soldiers need to have something to believe in and look forward to when they are put in difficult situations. She provides examples of how different groups of soldiers deal with this. According to her the American soldiers most likely yell “God Bless America” before they go out to battle. Their enemy in Afghanistan, the Taliban, in turn yells “Allahu Akbar” which is Arabic for “God is greater”. These two battle cries are what many would use to describe these two groups. Hassan's description of Norwegian soldiers is interesting and is what sets this article apart. She states that “it is not weird that the godless Norwegians have to resort to Norse mythology with a cry “to Valhall” and be transformed into Viking worshipping bad-ass war machines”¹²⁸ (Hassan, 2010, p. 48).

It is very interesting that she relates an understanding of Norse mythology as a source of identity to Norwegian ethnicity. This theme is not brought up in any other place in this debate that I found. Though this does not mean that it is a new idea. The connection between ethnicity and Norwegian national identity is commonly brought up in debates concerning

¹²⁶ I have tested this myself and it takes you to <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb.html?id=4>, the website for the Norwegian government.

¹²⁷ “leker vikinger i Sentral-Asia”

¹²⁸ “da er det i grunnen ikke rart at gudløse nordmenn må ty til norrøn mytologi ved å rope << til Valhall >> og bli forvandlet til vikingtilbedende bad-ass krigsmaskiner”

immigration (Gullestad, 2010). It is also interesting that Hassan refers to the Norwegian soldiers as “godless”. This may be her looking at Norwegian society as secular.

Hassan’s viewpoints and opinions add a different perspective on the events which are discussed in this media debate. She does not only look at the Norse references that were made by members of the Telemark Battalion, but also in Norwegian civil society. From what I could see she was also one of the few non-ethnic Norwegians that contributed to this debate. In an article from Aftenposten Hassan describes herself as a Norwegian-Somali. She moved to Norway as a teenager with her family from Kuwait. She describes herself as being a girl that has the best from three cultures: Arabian, Somali, and Norwegian (Nordli, 2011). Hassan’s blended cultural identity is a possible explanation for these different viewpoints and themes.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

In this section I have listed chronologically the references to Norse mythology and the Vikings that were made in my source material from 2010-2011. I followed this by giving a thematically organized analysis, which included the themes of dealing with death, motivation, and a company identity. I also looked at an article from Ilham Hassan where she brings up ideas concerning the use of Norse and Viking references and looks at them from a different angle. Ideas of a secular Norway and a “Vikingification” that has supposedly taken place.

The use of Norse mythology and Viking references shown through the actions and words of these Telemark Battalion soldiers was one of the most controversial aspects shown in my source material. Strong reactions by military and political leadership were prominent in the articles that make up this media debate. Members of the military chaplain corps also contributed their opinions and views. A dilemma arose concerning these references. What was appropriate and fit into Norwegian society and what sort of references did not fit into the commonly accepted values and cultural identity of Norway?

5. Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss the main findings of my analysis in relation to the theoretical perspectives described in chapter 2. There are two main themes that are focused on in this discussion: Norwegian peacefulness and Norwegian Christian cultural heritage. These themes will be looked at as components of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity.

5.1 Norwegian Peacefulness

In my opinion, peacefulness can be looked at as one of the main components of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity that is challenged by the actions of these soldiers. This is peacefulness in reference to Norway's role in international politics, with the military used as a tool by the state in foreign relations. The mediated picture of events concerning these soldiers in Afghanistan did not match up with the ideal of peacefulness that many Norwegians strive for and hold in high regard, as mentioned in chapter 2.3. If one looks at the prominent place that peacefulness holds through the theory of cultural memory, the "remembering" of peacefulness is shown by many of the contributors to this media debate who defend it.

In this section I will discuss the conceived idea of Norwegian peacefulness and how it was displayed in the "to Valhall" debate from 2010-2011. I will present the findings from my analysis chapters which concentrated on the warrior culture and Norse mythology. I will show examples from these chapters that displayed Norwegian peacefulness, as well as aspects that challenged it. I will break this discussion of Norwegian peacefulness into four sections: the role of Norwegian soldiers, motivation, macho attitudes, and Norway as exceptionally peaceful.

5.1.1 Role of Norwegian soldiers

Trigger happy and combative Norwegian soldiers breaks fundamentally with the Norwegian soldier myth, cultivated by the post-war times public defense.¹²⁹ (Kato Nykvist, Nationen, 29.09.10)

¹²⁹ "Triggerhype og stridslystne norsk soldater bryter fundamentalt med den norske soldatmyten, dyrket fram av etterkrigstidens folkeforsvars side"

This quote is a prime example of a common type of description from these 2010-2011 articles 2010-2011 concerning the actions of these Norwegian soldiers, as well as the reactions they received in the press. It also demonstrates the struggle between the ideal image of Norwegian soldiers that work in peaceful capacities and the realities of war that the soldiers in the Mek 4 experienced in Afghanistan. The military and political leadership had some difficulties with making space for professional, combative soldiers in the *Norwegian Goodness Regime* (Hanssen-Bauer, 2005).

The role of Norwegian soldiers is an underlying topic that was at the center of the “to Valhall” debate. It was brought up most often in association to the warrior culture. The military of a nation can be viewed as a “micro-edition of the country that they are to defend”¹³⁰ (Jacobsen, 2010, p. 11). Many contributors to these articles from 2010-2011 expressed concerns that these soldiers were not representing Norway in the way that its micro-edition should. The picture of Norwegian soldiers that only work in humanitarian and peace keeping roles was shattered by the portrayals of soldiers who express that they enjoy killing and that war is better than sex. In chapter 3.3, I describe the “American other” and how it was used as an object of comparison to Norwegian soldiers. The descriptions that are given of Norwegian soldiers in the newspaper articles show what kinds of roles Norwegian society wants their soldiers to have. When Norwegian soldiers are described as “nice” and “helpers” with honorable goals, it is easy to see that descriptions of war as being better than sex, battle cries of Valhall, and Viking warriors do not fit with these ideals.

In this media debate the soldiers in the Mek 4 Company were recruited by being described as the “Norwegian Vikings of our time” in Telemark Battalion recruitment material (Haug, 2010). Their vehicles and even the patches on their arms had Viking and Norse names and references. They are trained to be effective in combat and are some of the most well equipped soldiers in the Norwegian Armed Forces. Then when they are sent to Afghanistan, use these same kinds of references themselves, and are successful in combat, they are reprimanded by military and political leaders. They are described in the media by these leaders and journalists

¹³⁰ “en mikroutgave av det landet den skal forsvare”

as being part of a worrisome sub-culture that goes against the Armed Force's and society's values. From the soldiers point of view they were using the language and ideas that were provided them by the Armed Forces themselves and incorporating them into their role as professional soldiers. This double standard displayed by the military and political leaders makes it difficult for the soldiers themselves and society, to see what kind of role these soldiers are to play.

Many of the reactions to the soldiers' actions in this debate were possibly due to misinformation or a misunderstanding of the actual mission that Norwegian soldiers have in Afghanistan. Many believed that the Norwegian soldiers' only worked in the capacity of advisors and helping in rebuilding of institutions and facilities, not waging actual war. The Norwegian civilian population potentially viewed the role of the soldiers in this way because of the rhetoric used by politicians. This rhetoric is described in a number of articles as miscommunication between the politicians and the Norwegian civil population, concerning Norway's involvement in Afghanistan.¹³¹

Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Iver B. Neumann explain this miscommunication by saying that in the political debate "it has been under-communicated or even denied that Norway is in war"¹³² (Eriksen & Neumann, 2011, p. 428). It is possible that Norwegian politicians did not want to use rhetoric which included the word *war* because they were trying to maintain the conceived image of Norway as a peaceful country. Instead they call the mission Afghanistan by its official classification, a "non-international armed conflict"¹³³ (Anwar, 2010). If the politicians start acknowledging that Norway is participating in a war, it becomes more and more difficult for the country as a whole to maintain the peaceful image that they have portrayed to the rest of the world for so many years.¹³⁴

¹³¹ This rhetoric is described in the following articles: Lindekleiv, H. M. (2010) Ønsker forslag velkommen soldater provoserer 'Forsvaret glemmer ondskapen' *Vårt Land*; Nykvist, K. (2010) Hva er det vi ventet oss? *Nationen*.

¹³² "det blir underkommunisert eller endog benektet at Norge er i krig"

¹³³ "ikke-internasjonalt væpnet konflikt"

¹³⁴ This is tied to "peaceful tradition which goes back 100 years" (Leira, 2007).

If the politicians place the largest focus on the “peaceful” dimensions of their participation in this conflict, such as humanitarian aid, they believe that this will help keep the peaceful Norway identity intact. This is shown in an article from Norges Forsvar. One soldier describes an experience he had when the Norwegian Defense Minister at the time came to visit troops in Afghanistan. He says: “I experienced it more as a << political spectacle >>, where there came a heap of journalists behind the defense minister who was going to visit well-drilling projects and schools. The main reason was that she wanted to show the media the humanitarian efforts”¹³⁵ (Olsen, 2009b, p.12).

Concerning this topic of rhetoric, there was a question of what the new role or culture of professional soldiers was to be called. Diesen introduced the term *warrior culture*, in the Norwegian context to describe these professional soldiers. Lieutenant General Bernt Iver Ferdinand Brovold thought that the term *soldier culture* was better because warrior culture was too open ended and had a focus on violence (Løvland, et al., 2010). A third Norwegian general, Per Sverre Opedal, believed that *professional culture* was the best term because it was a neutral word that people understood. Also it showed that the soldiers needed to follow Norwegian values (Olsen, 2009a).¹³⁶ He believes that when it is described as *professional* people can look at it as just another type of job in society.¹³⁷ The disagreement on term usage is another example of this struggle for how these types of soldiers were going to fit into the Norwegian cultural identity. Words hold power and these generals were trying to find the best words possible so that these professional soldiers found the right place in the military as well as finding acceptance and support in the civil society.

¹³⁵ “ Jeg opplevde dette mer som et << politisk skuespill >>, hvor det kommer en haug journalister på slep for at forsvarsministeren skal besøke brønnprosjekter og skoler. Hovedgrunnen er at hun ønsker å vise media den humanitære innsatsen”.

¹³⁶ Hagesæther agrees with Opedal that the focus needs to be on the military professionalism, and that they should move away from the use of the term *warrior culture* (Hagesæther, 2010a).

¹³⁷ Røislien writes in her article “*There is no such thing as ‘nice soldiers’!*” about the division between the military and civilian worlds. An example of this is that some of the everyday tasks in the military setting would be punishable in civil society. The quotes that are listed in her article from Israeli soldiers also make it clear that there is a distinct divide between soldiers and civilians. They live in different “worlds” that many times have different standards or what can even be called different realities (Røislien, 2012). With this in mind, a pertinent question can be asked if one can just group together the job of a professional soldier, or any soldier that is, with any other job in civil society?

Faremo states that the actions of these soldiers do not match up with the goals of the mission that the Norwegian military has in Afghanistan (NTB, 2010b). Examples of these actions are, the battle cry of “to Valhall”, quotes found in the Alfa article, and the painting of Punisher Skulls on vehicles and houses in Afghanistan. This mission, as stated on the Armed Forces website, is to help the Afghan security forces to become self-sufficient in managing the security of their country (“Oppdraget til de norske styrkene”, 2012). It is difficult to say that these actions go against this mission. The type of motivation that the soldiers use to accomplish this mission are not explicitly listed. Therefore it can be problematic for Faremo to say that they are breaking with the mission’s goals. Once again this refers back to the miscommunication between civil society and the government concerning Norwegian involvement in Afghanistan. I interpret it more as Faremo reacting in this way because the actions went against the conceived Norwegian cultural identity that she and many Norwegians have. This conceived identity has peacefulness at its center, as well as a desire for the soldiers to have peaceful motives.

Looking at it from Faremo’s perspective it can be constructive to ask if these actions were actually detrimental to the work and cooperation that was going on between Norway, the ISAF, and the Afghan forces? These types of attitudes and actions could lead some to question the intentions of the Norwegian soldiers and if they were really there to help Afghanistan become self-sufficient.

Views are expressed in a great number of articles which show that the Norwegian civilian population and politicians were not completely ready to accept the changing roles of soldiers, as described by Diesen (2008). In the past the Norwegian Armed Forces consisted for the most part of conscripts that had a main responsibility of territorial defense. There were now divisions in the Norwegian military of professional soldiers that partook in international missions where the likelihood of combat is higher. It is possible that dimensions of this professional soldier role did not fit with the “ideal Norwegian soldier” that partakes mainly in humanitarian and peacekeeping work. This changing role was one of the main topics of debate concerning the different uses of warrior culture.

The soldiers' personal feelings concerning the role that they play in the military and Norwegian society, is also displayed in my analysis. In an article from Dagsavisen interviews were conducted with soldiers before they were going to be deployed for their first time to Afghanistan. There is a quote above the main body of text that comprises one of the interviews, it reads: "In Norway I do not feel valued as a soldier. It is not fun to walk around in uniform around normal people" (Sæther, 2010b, p. 27). He says that he does not feel like he has any support. Tore Riise also gave the example of when he was walking down the street in Oslo in uniform and was spit on by a young girl (Riise 2008). Røislien describes similar thoughts by saying that "the ISAF soldiers are fighting a war that the public in their homeland strictly does not care about"¹³⁸ (Røislien, 2012, p. 47). When looking at these kinds of feelings and stories expressed by soldiers it is possible to ask if this "to Valhall" media debate was another factor which contributed to the Norwegian soldiers not feeling valued by society?

The way that soldiers are portrayed and received in their own society can be an indicator of potential dimensions that make up their cultural identity. This was shown through the comparison that I used concerning the use of the "American other". My perception is that Norwegian soldiers are mostly respected for the work that they are doing in Afghanistan. At the same time they are not receiving extra praise for this work and there were the few examples of them getting negative treatment in Norway. One gets the impression that if Norwegian civil society were to praise the soldiers for accomplishments in battle, it would indicate that they support and legitimize violence. This support of violence is something that would clearly go against Norway's image of peacefulness.

This perceived lack of support that Norwegian soldiers receive from civil society can be a possible explanation for why the Mek 4 used Norse mythology and Viking themes in their company identity. They could have felt that due to the lack of support that they were receiving from society, they needed to turn to something else to get this sense of belonging and support. They turned to their company even more for this support and a sense of identity. The media portrayed the company as a whole turning to Norse mythology and Viking symbolism as a source of identity and inspiration.

¹³⁸ "ISAF-soldatene utkjemper en krig som offentligheten i deres hjemland strengt tatt ikke bryr seg om."

The type of support that soldiers receive from politicians and military commanders was also found in my source material. The comments from top military officials and politicians found in these articles were filled with mostly negative criticism of these soldiers. In her article, Hanne Eggen Røislien talks about how soldiers are instruments and not the decision makers in situations of war and combat. The governments and military commanders decide the mission and its objectives. One of the issues that comes with this is that the soldiers may not always agree with the state on the goals of the mission, but it is still their job to carry them out and find the motivation to do so (Røislien, 2012).

Røislien's article includes parts of interviews that she conducted with Israeli soldiers. The soldiers that she interviewed said that due to the fact that the politicians send them to these difficult and extreme situations they need to also take responsibility for what happens. They also believe that the politicians and commanders should not publicly criticize their soldiers. They explain that this does not mean that violence and the breaking of rules is accepted, just that issues are dealt with internally (Røislien, 2012). Some of the ideas expressed by these soldiers can be helpful contemplations in this discussion concerning what role professional soldiers will play in Norwegian Armed Forces and in the Norwegian cultural identity.

Due to this struggle that some soldiers experience in determining the role they play, the government should try to support their soldiers as much as they can. This means supporting them even when they make mistakes and perform unwanted actions. In the context of the events described in the "to Valhall" debate, this can be done in two interconnected ways. The first is fostering a culture in the military that supports the soldiers and promotes the values found in the Armed Forces Foundational Values. This support can also mean defending soldiers in the media when predominately negative images of them are portrayed to the civilian population in the press. The second way, is by looking at the varied roles that professional soldiers are placed in from a realistic point of view, which takes into consideration the potential for combat.

One term that I found especially interesting in this collection of newspaper articles was the word *patriot*. I found it only one place in my source material, and the way that it was used is what intrigued me. In the English dictionary a patriot is described as "a person who loves and strongly supports or fights for his or her country" ("Patriot [Def. 1]", n.d). This reference to *patriot* is found in a Nationen article from November 12, 2011 where Emil Johansen was interviewed about his book. He is asked about why he describes himself as a patriot in his writing. He says he uses this term because he feels so lucky that he was born in Norway and that he loves his country and democracy. By taking a job as a soldier he says that he is able to defend this country and the ideals that it stands for (Barstad, 2011).

The way that Johansen used the term *patriot* is often tied to the American portrayal of soldiers and is rare in the Norwegian context. The Norwegian dictionary defines patriot as a: "friend of the fatherland, ardent supporter of a district, a sports club, etc."¹³⁹ (<http://nordbok.uio.no/>). This definition is similar to the English one, but adds that it can be a person who is extremely proud of the region or district they are from or the sports club they support. The Norwegian definition also puts less focus on fighting for your country. I did not find any other examples of patriot being used in other articles that were a part of this "to Valhall" debate. This can show a difference in how the soldiers, such as Johansen, view themselves and the work they do in comparison to the view that civil society might have.

In a document published by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs one of the main sources of legitimacy that is listed for Norway's peacefulness is their *tradition* for peacefulness. This tradition goes back over 100 years and is the oldest consistent self-image that Norway has (Leira, 2007). This pamphlet describes how during the 1990's the military was integrated into the self-image of a peaceful nation to a larger degree. This being through peacekeeping and peacemaking operations. Here it lists the Telemark Battalion as presenting themselves as "a part of the Norwegian peaceful tradition".¹⁴⁰ Also that the operations in Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq are portrayed as being peaceful operations with focus on "stabilizing, reconciliation and reconstruction"¹⁴¹ (Leira, 2007, p. 14). This description of the

¹³⁹ "fedrelandsvenn, gløende tilhenger av et distrikt, en idrettsklubb" (bokmål dictionary)

¹⁴⁰ "som del av den norske fredstradisjonen"

¹⁴¹ "stabilisering, forsoning og gjenoppbygging"

Telemark Battalion as being a part of the peaceful Norwegian tradition is a possible reason why many reacted so strongly in this debate. The Telemark Battalion was supposed to be a critical member in Norway's project of peace. The words and actions of these soldiers did not match up with the role that they were supposed to play.

“Norwegian forces' participation in a concrete and real warfare with harder skirmishes and a more brutal everyday, in turn, requires the development of a setting that makes it possible to tackle these challenges” (Røislien, 2012, p. 48). This quote brings up a critical point in the discussion concerning the role of Norwegian soldiers. If cries of “to Valhall”, Norse/Viking references, and patches with skulls on them are not something that Norwegian society is willing to accept from their soldiers, what is acceptable? The role that these Norwegian ISAF soldiers find themselves in requires “something extra” to tackle the challenges that come with these types of missions. As this media debate has shown, society and government leaders would like to have something to say about what this is.

5.1.2 Motivation

Motivation is one of the most important factors involving the work that soldiers do. Concern for the source of, as well as what kind of motivation the soldiers possessed, was a common theme in this media debate. In connection to the warrior culture, the motivational factors that were found in this sub-group, such as the battle cry of “to Valhall”, were described as negative and harmful. Due to Norway's focus on peacefulness as a central component of their identity, soldiers are expected to have peaceful intentions in the missions that they are carrying out. Examples of these peaceful motivational aspects that were found in my source material are building “girls schools and democracy in remote countries”¹⁴² (Nykvist, 2010) also “exporting democracy and women's liberation in Afghanistan”¹⁴³ (Brededvein, 2010). Actual combat does not match up with the tasks that are expected of Norwegian soldiers. Along with this the motivation that is needed in combat situations can vary greatly from the motivation that is needed in peacekeeping and building democracy.

¹⁴² “jenteskoler og demokratibyggning i et fjernliggende land”

¹⁴³ “å eksportere demokrati og kvinnefrigjøring i Afghanistan”

Helge Simonnes describes similar ideas in a Vårt Land article. He says the picture that Norwegians have received concerning the mission in Afghanistan is of “soldiers that work for peace, play football with small boys and have discussions with Muslim leaders”¹⁴⁴ (Simonnes, 2010). He describes this as a “glossy picture” of what is actually happening there. What is left out in these descriptions is that these same soldiers are shot at and bombed while in combat.

In chapter 3.2 I looked at two different uses of warrior culture. In the first description, this motivation is portrayed as coming from a love for violence and fighting for one’s own honor. This has ties back to traditional ideas tied to the warrior classes and knights of the past. These men fought for themselves and not for the society around them (Ydstebø, 2009). When looking at the second use of warrior culture the motivation has its foundation in camaraderie and fighting for the man that is next to you in battle. In my source material there was much more focus on the first use of warrior culture and the type of motivation behind it. This can possibly be explained by the fact that these types of news stories are more controversial and exciting, and will help to sell more newspapers. From the perspective of a Norwegian identity the motivation and means used by Norwegian soldiers should be as peaceful as possible, and therefore this first description which focuses on warrior values and violence was problematic.

The second description also contains aspects that are problematic due to the general idea of professional soldiers. Ulriksen describes many Norwegians as associating these professional soldiers with mercenaries, who are soldiers that are only motivated by money and fighting for their own honor (Ulriksen, 2002). Diesen also states that to be a professional soldier you need to enjoy the type of work that is done in the military (Gravdal, 2010). The perception of these soldiers as mercenaries and Diesen’s previous description of someone having to enjoy the work done in the military are ideas that many in Norwegian civil society perceive as strange. Many do not understand why anyone would sign up to go to war, where you are putting yourself in harms way.

¹⁴⁴ “soldater som arbeider for fred, spiller fotball med guttunger og samtaler med muslimske ledere”

Wenneberg and his role as the leader of this warrior culture was a common theme used by contributors to this media debate. As the leader of the Mek 4 company his ideas concerning motivation were described and criticized in this debate. The picture of him with the Viking helmet and Punisher skull patch as well as the battle cry of Valhall were viewed as negative aspects of his motivational style as a leader. Faremo and Sunde mention in various articles that focus needed to be placed on leadership and that the actions of Wenneberg and his leadership style did not fit with the image that Norway wanted to portray.¹⁴⁵ Wenneberg did have support for his style of leadership from his own men. In a Dagbladet article he was described by a couple of his men as “the best leader they have had in the Armed Forces, a person that created a good environment both academically and socially, and that always took care of the soldiers”¹⁴⁶ (Gilbrant, 2010b).

Another aspect of motivation that was discussed concerning the “American other” is the reception that soldiers receive when they come home from deployment. The two examples that I gave concerning this type of home coming reception in Norway focused on the fact that it is not made into a big display. Also that for a professional soldier this type of reception should not be needed as a motivational factor in the work that they do. This may be true, but it still says something about the way that a country looks at its military and the role that they are to have in society. Homecoming receptions possibly take this form because Afghanistan is not considered *war* in technical terms by the politicians. The returning soldiers do not need a parade thrown in their honor if they are not returning from a “real” war, is potentially the feeling.

Even if the soldiers do not need a parade in their honor when they arrive home from Afghanistan, as described by Sæther, support from Norwegian society is still something that is important to them and gives them motivation. When soldiers express that they do not feel valued for the work they are doing in the military from society, it is understandable that they turn to another source to find motivation (Sæther, 2010b). Motivation from Norse and Viking

¹⁴⁵ NTB. (2010b, September 28). Tar avstand fra soldaters ukultur. *Agderposten*.; Haug. (2010, September 29). Blir kalt <<vår tids vikinger>>. *Klassekampen*.; Lerø. (2010, October 1). Ledelse i møte med ondskapen. *Ukeavisen Ledelse*. Faremo (2010, October 5). Soldatkultur - handler ikke om ord. *VG*.

¹⁴⁶ “den beste lederen de har hatt i Forsvaret, en person som skapte et kjempemiljø både faglig og sosialt, og som alltid tok vare på soldatene”

ideas were the sources they turned to. The modern peaceful Norwegian society was lacking the specific cultural resources that were needed in supporting and motivating combatant soldiers who were fighting in a foreign country, and were guided by a mission that was set out by NATO.

One aspect of motivation pertaining to these professional soldiers that is discussed and expressed by people like Diesen, Wenneberg, and Johansen is that of *camaraderie*. In the settings that these professional soldiers find themselves in, fighting in a foreign country with missions and objectives that are constantly up for debate and can change with time (Røislien, 2012), it is important that they have something and someone to always trust in. Diesen and Johansen express this as a “family feeling” (Bredeveien, 2010a) and not letting down the man next to you (Johansen, 2012). Diesen also describes this motivation as being so strong that you are willing to die for your fellow soldiers, the company, and the mission (Gravdal, 2011). These men look to their fellow soldiers and their company as one of their strongest motivating factor. This type of motivation was displayed in this media debate and it is something that is important in the real life settings that these soldiers are put in.

5.1.3 Macho Attitudes

The terms *macho* and *machismo* cannot be found explicitly many places in my source material but examples of this kind of attitude are prevalent and play an important role in the descriptions of these Norwegian soldiers. Machismo is defined as “an attitude, quality, or way of behaving that agrees with traditional ideas about men being very strong and aggressive” (www.merriam-webster.com). Kamal Anwar (2010) gives a good description of a number of actions from this debate that could fall under this macho theme. He writes in an Aftenposten article that “skulls, the macho slogans, testosterone, and the vulgar language” all contain components of this machismo attitude.¹⁴⁷ Another example of this macho behavior is the picture of Wenneberg on the cover of VG from September 28, 2010. This macho attitude does not fit with the peaceful image of Norwegian soldiers.

The strongest examples of this macho attitude are found in the Alfa article *Norway in War*. One quote that many reacted to from this article was “to be in battle is worth the three months

¹⁴⁷ “Hodeskallene, de macho slagordene, testosteronet og den vulgære munnbruken”

without fucking. That maybe sounds dumb, but it is better than having sex”¹⁴⁸ (Rønningen, 2010, p. 112). Many of the references in the media coverage concerning the idea of a warrior culture are tied to this quote and these types of macho attitudes. This quote demonstrates how machismo attitudes can be a component of this warrior culture, as described by the soldiers themselves. It also shows how themes of sex are tied to these macho attitudes. Particularly as it relates to the first use of the term that I have described. When it came to the article in Alfa, the soldiers interviewed most likely wanted to look tough, due to the type of magazine that they were going to be in. This macho image is one that does not fit in with a Norwegian soldier that is supposed to have peaceful intentions and be “the nicest boy in the UN class”¹⁴⁹ (Versto, 2009, p. 3).

The history of Norway’s military can also be looked at as a contributing factor to the macho attitudes that are displayed in the “to Valhall” debate. As mentioned previously Norway does not have a military past that it uses as a defining identity factor. This concentration on peace has potentially lead to Norway not celebrating its military accomplishments on a large scale. Due to this lack of a strong military history the members of the Telemark Battalion looked for a group that displayed qualities of excellence in combat. They were also looking for a group that could possibly help them in finding legitimacy as a new group of “Norwegian warriors”. As warriors they felt that they needed a tough and fierce group to find inspiration in. The most fitting group that they could think of was the Vikings. This was mentioned both by Anwar and Wenneberg. The Vikings were known as being particularly ruthless and dominating warriors that conquered large areas of land. From the perspective of a pure effectiveness in battle they seem to be the perfect group to look up to.

Even if the Vikings seemed like an appropriate source of legitimacy, pride, and symbolism for the members of the Mek 4 company, the media reactions expressed feelings of disapproval. This macho source of inspiration was shown as being inappropriate. It did not fit with the type of identity and image that Norwegian society wanted to portray to the rest of the world. This is an example of how cultural memory can give perspective on these events. The

¹⁴⁸ “Det å være i kamp er verdt de tre månedene uten puling. Det høres kanskje teit ut, men det er bedre enn å knulle”.

¹⁴⁹ “den snilleste gutten i FN-klassen”

use of Vikings and Norse mythology in this military context was rejected and their warrior culture was to be left in the past and not associated to the modern Norwegian cultural identity.

Research has shown that comparing combat to sex is not something new or unique to this Norwegian case. In one article an American military ethicist, Pete Kilner, was interviewed concerning these Mek 4 soldiers' actions (Eliassen, 2010).¹⁵⁰ In Kilner's research he interviewed a large number of young American soldiers that had served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He found through these interviews that it was very common for soldiers to talk about war being more satisfying than sex.¹⁵¹ J. Glenn Gray writes in his book *The Warriors: Reflections on men in battle* (1998) about this same topic and he believes that battle gives men "an escape from themselves that is very different from the escapes induced by sexual love or alcohol" (Gray, 1998).¹⁵² Gray and Kilner both found through their studies and observations that soldiers claiming war is better than sex is common because war and sex are both experiences which are filled with extremely strong emotions and feelings.

Even though this comparison to sex, according to some experts, was very common and almost expected from the soldiers, it was a component that still was not approved of in all parts of Norwegian society. It even caused a place in Norway to boycott sales of VG when the front page showed a soldier with the headline "combat is better than sex".¹⁵³ This boycott occurred in Eidskog in Hedmark, where nine stores and gas stations removed 500 copies from their newsstands due to this front page quote. A member from the commercial association in Skotterud said that "no one in Eidskog thinks that war is better than sex"¹⁵⁴ and they did not want their children to see the headline (Hauge, 2010).

¹⁵⁰ Pete Kilner is a professor of Leader development and organizational learning at West Point and has a Ph.D. in Education. ("Biography - LTC Pete Kilner, Ph.D.", n.d.)

¹⁵¹ Kilner believes that this is due to the fact that you cannot find an experience with stronger feelings than when your life is threatened and when you have the power over life and death, as it often is in war. Sex is also something that is filled with lots of strong emotions and feelings and therefore these soldiers were comparing one situation filled with lots of feelings to another that was almost at the same level (Eliassen, 2010).

¹⁵² Gray was a philosopher that served in WWII and wrote about his experiences and other soldiers experiences in war.

¹⁵³ Appendix E shows this front page from VG from September 27, 2010. Original Norwegian: "Krig er bedre enn sex"

¹⁵⁴ "Ingen i Eidskog syns krig er bedre enn sex"

The responses by many of the contributors to this media debate and the boycott of VG showed how these machismo attitudes did not have a place in the Norwegian conceived identity of how a soldier is supposed to act. They are supposed to have values that are based on the Norwegian Armed Forces Foundational Values, which are in line with society's. In response to those that do not believe that this kind of macho behavior has a place in the Norwegian identity, Kato Nykvist believes that it should be expected. He states in a Nationan article that "One can easily say that use of Norse symbols and politically incorrect macho chat are unwanted anomalies, but it is nevertheless an expected product of the Armed Forces's conscious cultivating of a professional warrior culture"¹⁵⁵ (Nykvist, 2010).

Concerning the attitudes that these soldier "should" have, there are a number of ideas that could be looked at and that I felt were missing in this media debate. Instead of focusing on condemning the macho and tough attitudes, which are focused on comparisons to sex and unwanted violence, focus could be placed on promoting and finding examples of ideas such as *bravery* and *courage*. It would not be a difficult task to find examples of Norwegian soldiers that exemplify these qualities. These are ideas that can be seen as tough and fit with the combative role that these Telemark Battalion are placed in, as well as being seen as positive attitudes in reference to the peaceful cultural identity of Norway.¹⁵⁶ The American usage of the term patriot in the Norwegian context, as used by Emil Johansen, can also be a possible positive contribution to this discussion concerning the attitudes and motivation of professional Norwegian soldiers. The media can also play a role in printing stories that focus on these types of attributes in soldiers.

5.1.4 Norway as Exceptionally Peaceful

One of the main terms that Eriksen and Neumann (2011) use to describe Norway is *exceptionally peaceful*. This peacefulness is described in chapter 2, with examples of the work that Norway does in international peace talks and the high percentage of its yearly budget that is used for development aid. In my analysis there are various descriptions which

¹⁵⁵ "En kan med letthet si at bruk av norrøne symboler og politisk ukorrekt machopratt er uønskete avarter, men det er like fullt et forventet produkt av Forsvarets bevisste odling av en profesjonell krigerkultur"

¹⁵⁶ These same ideas are presented in the Forsvarts Verdigrunnlag (2011). There are three main core values that are presented in this document. The first two core values are respect and responsibility. The third core value presented is *mot*, which can be translated to courage or bravery.

support the idea of Norwegians and the Norwegian state displaying their self-image of exceptional peacefulness. It has also become in a way a type of identification tag for the country. This idea of exceptional peacefulness was challenged by the actions, attitudes, and symbolism used by soldiers in the Mek 4 company. This idea of exceptionality is also expressed by Gripsrud in his theory concerning the media and society. He says that people use the media to show what sets them apart. Norway as an exceptionally peaceful country is one of the defining aspects that sets it apart in the international context (Gripsrud, 2002).

In my opinion one of the strongest examples of this self-image of exceptionally peaceful is shown through my description of the “American other”. Concerning the “American other” I provided descriptions of American soldiers’ attributes. In Anwar’s description of soldiers in the Mek 4 company he states that many of the actions that are described in this media are what most Norwegians associated with “simpler” American soldiers (Anwar, 2010). This demonstrates how Norwegian soldiers are “supposed” to be exceptional in relation to the American soldiers in how they conduct themselves in war.

In the warrior culture chapter Norwegians are portrayed as the peaceful helpers that are trying to make the world a better place through the work they are doing in Afghanistan. The Americans on the other hand are portrayed as violent warriors that are there to promote their own goals and defend their own interests. This comparison is used to support the idea of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity. This can be shown by who they are (or are supposed to be), as well as by showing who they are not. In this case the “who they are not” for Norway can be described as the “American other”. All of the descriptions that I have listed concerning the American military are aspects that are unwanted in the Norwegian context and demonstrate ways in which Norwegian soldiers are exceptional.

One theme that is brought up several times in my source material was the fact that the references to Norse mythology could be tied to Nazi Germany. Hagesæther was deeply concerned that some would make the connection between the present day Norwegian soldier’s use of Norse mythology and that of the Nazis. The last time a connection was made between Norse mythology and the military in Norway was during Nazi Germany’s

occupation. Gripsrud says that Viking symbols had positive meanings attached to them during the 1920s in Norway, but after the Nazis used them during the war it is impossible to see these types of connections without the Nazi connotation (Gripsrud, 2002). It is understandable that people were concerned with this type of symbol use. Aspects of the Nazi occupation are not something that people want to include in the modern day Norwegian cultural identity.

This is not saying that opposition to ideas tied to Nazism particularly shows an exceptional peacefulness. Most people would not want to be associated with the Nazis. Hagesæther's concern for this possible connection shows that he was trying to cover all his bases when it comes to making sure that Norway's peaceful identity is defended and held in place. This is a type of historical connection that a peaceful nation's military should not have any association with.

5.2 Norwegian Christian Cultural Heritage

As I have shown in chapters 3 and 4, a number of actions and attitudes of soldiers in the Telemark Battalion from 2010-2011 were not well accepted by the Norwegian society. This was according to the press coverage of what I have labeled the "to Valhall" debate. One of the main reasons given for this disapproval is that these ideas break with the cultural heritage of Norway. One of the main components of this cultural heritage that I will now focus on is Christianity.

In this section I will discuss how Christianity was displayed as a component of a Norwegian cultural identity. This is not only Christianity in the sense of organized religion but also as it is used for its cultural heritage significance. There were two main ways that Christianity was displayed and discussed in this debate. The first was its use as a foundational source for Norwegian values. The second is the shown through the role that military chaplains played in this media debate and what this can show about Norwegian culture.

5.2.1 Norwegian Values

Many of the participants in this mediated debate expressed feelings that the values of Norwegian society and the Norwegian Armed Forces, were under attack. This attack came from attitudes and references that were tied to a warrior culture and the use of Norse mythology and Viking symbolism by Norwegian soldiers. It was expressed in several articles that these values are tied to Christianity. These Norse references and warrior culture therefore were described as needing to stop, because they did not line up with the accepted Norwegian value system.

In his book *Learning to be Norwegian: A case study of identity management in religious education in Norway*, Lars Laird Iversen studies the role that religion plays in identity management in Norway. In his analysis he found that “the concept of “values” is a crucial node in connecting religion and national identity” (Iversen, 2012, p. 124). I found that values played a very similar role in the connection between religion and cultural identity formation in my research. Iversen describes the rationale for why values are taught in Norwegian schools. He says that in the past it was to help “students make ethical decisions about right and wrong, good and bad” (Iversen, 2012, p. 125). After 2005 the rationale had changed. Now values were to be taught so that “pupils may understand who they are” (Iversen, 2012, p. 125). The usage of *values* in understanding “who you are” is similar to the way that I perceived it being used in the “to Valhall” media debate. Values and their source was the basis for much of the concern that was shown by leaders such as Faremo, Sunde, and Hagesæther. Cultural memory helps to grasp why these Norwegian values are defended so adamantly. By explaining which values are to be preserved and defended you show which ones are to be “remembered” in the present and in the future.

Protestant Christianity in the form of Lutheranism is the basis for many of the values that are seen as foundational in Norway. They are the values that are to be “remembered”. Norse and Viking values have been “forgotten”. References to Vikings and Norse mythology found in other contexts are still accepted. These contexts are more superficial such as the Vikings found in tourist stores and football fans wearing plastic Viking helmets. They are seen as not being harmful or a threat to more important things such as values.

This matches up with ideas from Andreassen. He says that “the close relation between Christianity and national identity leaves no room for combining a Norwegian national identity with a religion other than Christianity” (Andreassen, 2014, p. 13). In this media debate Norse mythology can be viewed as a “religion”, which the soldiers in Mek 4 were attempting to combine with their professional soldier identity, as well as their company identity. Andreassen also describes this by saying that “other religions are mystified and represent pre-modern values which potentially are in conflict with religious freedom and democracy” (Andreassen, 2014, p. 13). In this debate the values that are associated with the Vikings and Norse mythology are presented in this same way. That is why some argue that these types of references should end altogether. Heller’s thoughts on cultural memory show similar ideas. She says that religion is the most powerful binding force in building up identity. Those who criticized the use of Norse mythology knew that religion had lots of power and were worried that the “wrong” religion was being used by the soldiers to build up their identity (Heller, 2001).

In one article Hagesæther describes Norway’s values as being based on a “Christian and humanist tradition” (Kleppa, 2010, p. 10). This was the same article where Hagesæther says that he believes that the inspiration for the Norse mythological references could come from Black Metal music. He states that this music displayed values that are “in a stark contrast to Christianity’s message” (Kleppa, 2010, p. 10). Hagesæther believes that the references to Norse mythology should not be used because they do not fit with the Christian tradition. He views these two sources of values as incompatible. In response to this there was an article which contained responses to Hagesæther comments by a military officer. He stated that the military does not have preference to Norse mythology and that they want soldiers to have “healthy values” (Sævik, 2010). Both Hagesæther and this officer show disapproval of values based on Norse mythology.

In my source material there were several occasions where contributors to this media debate stated that the problem with the actions of these soldiers was that they went against the military’s values. The best source that I could find for these values was the *Forsvarets*

Verdigrunnlag (Armed Forces Foundational Values).¹⁵⁷ Under the *Ethical Foundations* heading from the 2000 version of this document it says that “societies historical and cultural basic values as shown in our society’s Christian and humanist tradition” (Forsvarets overkommando, 2000, p. 7).¹⁵⁸ This echoes the thoughts of Hagesæther concerning the foundation of Norwegian values being in Christianity. This Christian heritage is also listed in the opening paragraph of the Norwegian Constitution (“The Constitution - Complete text”, 2013).

While looking at various editions of the Armed Forces Foundational Values, I found that from 2003-2011 there was not many changes in the content and appearance of this document.¹⁵⁹ In 2011, during the time period that I am studying, a new version came out, which was drastically different. An article from NTB on October 6, 2010 describes how this new version of the foundational values was going to be released and that members of the Telemark Battalion were going to contribute to the contents of this document (NTBtekst, 2010). The article describes how the members of the Telemark Battalion attended a seminar on how soldiers should make statements, attitudes, ethics and leadership.¹⁶⁰

This seminar and the release of a drastically new version of the Armed Forces foundational values may demonstrate how those in political and military leadership positions viewed the actions of these soldiers as challenging the foundational values of the military and Norwegian society as a whole. Coming out with a new version of this document right in the middle of a heated media debate probably was the action that leaders took to show civil society that they were taking these events seriously. This new version still gave “Christian and humanist

¹⁵⁷ References to the military’s values and the Forsvarets Verdigrunnlag can be found in the following articles: Kleppa, J. (2010, April 12). Norske soldater er påvirket av Black Metal. *DagenMagazinet*, p.10.; Ege, R. T., Hegvik G. K., Andersen, M. A., and Johansen, M. (2010b, September 27) Dødninghoder. *VG*. p. 8.; Bredeveien, J. M. (2010a, October 1) En gang var vi krigere. *Morgenbladet*.; Weihe, H. J. W. & Smith-Solbakken, M. (2010, October 1). Krig, sex, språk og verdier. *Stavanger Aftenblad*.; Ofstad, S. (2010, October 6). Den nye soldatkulturen. *Klassekampen*.; NTB (2010a, September 29) Soldater sparkes for dårlige holdninger. *DagenMagazinet*. p. 6.

¹⁵⁸ This could also be found in the version from 2011 on the opening page. Here Harald Sunde writes that the Armed Forces values have their starting point in society’s “Christian and humanist tradition” (Forsvaret, 2011).

¹⁵⁹ I looked at the versions of this document: (Forsvarets overkommando FO,1998), (Forsvarets overkommando 2000), (Forsvarets overkommando, 2003), and (Forsvaret, 2011).

¹⁶⁰ References to this seminar are found in Haug, K. (2010, September 29) Blir kalt << vår tids vikinger >>. *Klassekampen*. p. 6.; Gilbrant, J. (2010a, October 8) Vi vinket og smilte til << Jokkes >> mordere: omstridt offiser. *Dagbladet*.; Lerø, M. (2010, October 1) Ledelse i møte med ondskapen. *Ukeavisen Ledelse*. p. 2.

traditions” as the basis for these values in the introduction written by Harald Sunde (Forsvaret, 2011). The fact that there is still reference to this Christian heritage and traditions can show that Norse mythology and Viking symbolism were seen as a threat. It is possible that the new Norwegian Armed Forces Foundational Values were created because the older versions of the document did not cover the types of challenges that came with the new roles of professional soldiers that were working in the international context (Ofstad, 2010).

Norse values used in a positive way are mentioned in the article by Kamal Anwar, in *Aftenposten*. He believes that they should be an incorporated part of the Norwegian cultural and Norwegian soldier identity. He defends this use and says that “Hitler’s five year occupation does not give the Nazis a monopoly on the Norse cultural heritage” (Anwar, 2010, p. 4). This demonstrates an important distinction in this debate. Many in the military and political leadership did not approve of these Norse values and Viking symbolism. Whereas Anwar shows that for some soldiers these Norse values and Viking references are a feature that they would like to include in their identity. These two different views on the use of Norse mythology show the difficulty and complexity that arises when trying to create a cultural identity.

Death is an inevitable aspect of war, and the way that people deal with death often takes on a religious dimension. In an article from *Vårt Land*, Paul Otto Brunstad describes how he believes that these soldiers possibly used Norse and Viking references to deal with the violence and death around them. He also believed that it could have been the way that they looked for a religious dimension to help them cope with what they experienced in battle. If this was the way that the soldiers coped with their experiences, it is understandable that various people did not approve of the soldiers turning to Norse mythology instead of the Christian roots of Norwegian heritage. It undermines the foundational role of Christian heritage in Norwegian society and its values (Lindekleiv, 2010).

There was one voice in this debate that wanted these Norse references to stop, but not because of the perceived threat that they had to the Christian cultural heritage. This voice was Ilham Hassan and she presents these ideas in her article *Odin meg her og Odin meg der*

(2010, Morgenbladet). She agrees with Faremo, Hagesæther, and Sunde in this debate that references to Norse mythology should be removed from the Norwegian military and Norwegian society altogether. She says that this is due to the violence and brutality of the Vikings, standing in contrast to the peaceful and democratic Norway of today. She does not mention Norwegian cultural heritage and Christianity as a component of it. Instead focuses on modern day Norwegian values, not being tied directly to one religion or another, because this causes issues in a multicultural and diverse Norwegian society.

Hassan is of the opinion that this connection with the Vikings persists in modern Norwegian society and that “neither Christianization of the country, oil intoxication, the big money bag or the modern technology managed to sweep Odin & co. off the road”¹⁶¹ (Hassan, 2010, p. 48). Norwegian soldiers are described in her article as being “godless” and that when they use the battle cry of Valhall they are “transformed into Viking worshipping-bad ass war machines”¹⁶² (Hassan, 2010, p. 48). In these two quotes Hassan shows that she believes Norway is a secular country based on peaceful, modern, and democratic principles. As well as being a country that is multicultural and religiously diverse. This demonstrates the difficulty that occurs when trying to define a group's cultural identity. It also shows how a person coming from an immigrant background might have a different relationship with the source of values in Norwegian society and the military.

When looking at this concept of values there were very few examples of explicit descriptions of what is meant by *Norwegian values* or on the other side *Norse values*. They were more just ideas that were defended or rejected, people are expected to know what is meant by their use and what they include. Those that criticized these attitudes and actions maybe did not know exactly why they thought these Norse and Viking references were wrong. In an effort to describe these feelings of disagreement they deployed the term *values* because it can be used broadly and is a strong word that people react to.

¹⁶¹ “verken kristningen av landet, oljeberuselsen, den store pengesekken eller den moderne teknologien klarte å feie Odin & co. av veien”

¹⁶² “bli forvandlet til vikingtilbedende bad-ass krigsmaskiner”

5.2.2 The role of military chaplains

The military chaplains were a visible and vocal group throughout this two year “to Valhall” media debate. In this section I will describe how the role these military chaplains are shown in can be looked at through Davie’s vicarious religion and the Assmanns’ cultural memory.

Davie’s theory of vicarious religion can be used to give perspective on different reasons why military chaplains were predominant voices in this media debate. The specific aspect that I am referring to in vicarious religion is the participation of the church and religious experts in social debates pertaining to the general public. Hagesæther, leader of the military chaplain corps, was one of the people who helped to start this media debate by showing concern in regards to the actions of these soldiers. In other articles it was evident that the military chaplains were consulted as religious experts in this case concerning the Norwegian military and religious issues. This was a logical choice by these journalists considering the “monopoly” that the Church of Norway (Det Norske Kirke) has on religion and spirituality in the military.¹⁶³

It is my view that the chaplains being entrusted with the responsibility of educating soldiers in ethics is also a dimension of religion operating vicariously. By giving them this responsibility, it demonstrates that Norwegian society believes that Christian values and ethics are what should be taught in the military. It shows that society is accepting of these Christian values and ethics and is leaving it up to the religious professionals to make sure that this is what is being taught and supported.

The role of the chaplains in the Norwegian military is one that is described as changing with time. In the past it held, first and foremost, a religious focus and in recent times more focus has been given to the ethics training of soldiers. Hagesæther proposes another role that he believes is developing as well as needed, concerning military chaplains. He says that if a

¹⁶³ I say that it is a monopoly because of the fact that all the military chaplain corps are under the leadership of the Oslo diocese in the Norwegian church (“Feltprest”, n.d.). The *Feltprost* (Dean of the military chaplain corps) also has the role of religious and ethical advisor to the Chief of Defense in the Norwegian Armed Forces (“Feltprestkorpset”, n.d.). This again demonstrates how the Church of Norway has a great deal of influence concerning religious issues in the military.

warrior culture continues to develop in the military, the chaplains can play a role as a “corrective force” (Lindekleiv, 2011a). By this he means that they can be a moral compass for military leaders and soldiers when questions come up concerning ethical issues or when questionable actions occur.¹⁶⁴ I believe that this once again displays aspects of vicarious religion by the type of role that the military chaplains are assigning themselves. This is inline with the ethical training responsibility that is already assigned to them. This corrective force as described by Hagesæther, can be seen as religion operating vicariously. Davie says that religious professionals are to “embody social and moral order” as well as “uphold certain standards of behavior” (Davie, 2006, p. 26). The idea that they are to live up to this high moral standard is what can be perceived as what “allows” them to work as this corrective force.

The criticism from the chaplains was not only against the soldiers and their actions. In the Reinertsen article from *Morgenbladet* the chaplains that were interviewed also criticized the politicians for not using language and rhetoric that accurately described and explained what the soldiers were going through in Afghanistan. They stated that politicians need to understand the evils of war so that they can understand what the soldiers experience. This can be seen as an example of the corrective force which the military chaplains might be playing in the Norwegian Armed Forces (Reinertsen, 2010).

I did not find any references in my source materials where leaders from other religious traditions or church bodies shared or were asked their opinions concerning these events. This dominance by Christianity shows the important place that it holds in the Norwegian cultural identity. It would have been interesting to see what other religious leaders or religious bodies had to say about these events and the role that religion played in it.

¹⁶⁴ Hagesæther also discusses these ideas in an article he wrote for *PACEM*, which is a journal that is produced by the Feltprestkorpset (Military Chaplain Corps). Hagesæther argues in the article that Natural Law based on Lutheran teachings should be the foundation for this critically corrective force that the military chaplains would play. Here is the reference to the article: Hagesæther, A. P. (2010b) Norsk krigerkultur forankret i norrøn mytologi eller i naturretten? *PACEM*. 13(1), 61-76.

5.3 Concluding Remarks

In this discussion I have looked at the two main aspects of Norwegian cultural identity that I observed in this mediated picture of events. These were peacefulness and Christian cultural heritage. I have looked at these in comparison to the theoretical perspectives that are described in chapter 2 concerning the relationship between the media and society, as well as aspects of Norwegianness.

Under the discussion concerning peacefulness I showed that it is a component of the Norwegian cultural identity that is extremely important. The descriptive examples from the newspaper articles shows that the actions and attitudes of these Telemark Battalion soldiers were seen as a challenge to Norway's self-image as a peaceful culture. This peacefulness was looked at closer through the role of Norwegian soldiers, their motivation, macho attitudes they displayed, and Norway as an exceptionally peaceful country.

Concerning the discussion on Christianity there were two main themes discussed. The first was Norwegian values. I discussed how Norwegian values were used in this debate and focused specifically on the foundations that they are described as having in Norway's Christian cultural heritage. The second main idea that I discussed was the role that military chaplains played in this debate and how this showed aspects of vicarious religion and cultural memory.

6. Conclusion

In my research question I asked how the mediated picture of events from 2010-2011 concerning actions carried out by members of the Telemark battalion portrayed aspects of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity. My sub-questions focused further on peacefulness and Christian cultural heritage and what aspects of these ideas were reflected and created in this “to Valhall” debate. I analyzed this mediated picture of events by focusing on the themes of a warrior culture and Norse mythology/Viking symbolism. From these themes and the discussion surrounding them, two main aspects of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity emerged and were expanded.

6.1 Summary

The first aspect of this cultural identity is peacefulness. The long standing tradition and identity of peacefulness was challenged by the actions portrayed in the “to Valhall” media debate. The soldiers that carried out these actions were described as being part of a worrisome warrior culture. The ideas contained in this warrior culture did not fit with the prescribed role that Norwegian soldiers were “supposed” to have in the Norwegian society. They are meant to be “peacekeepers” and work in “peacekeeping missions”. This also carries over into their reputation in international diplomacy. If Norwegian soldiers do not exemplify this peacefulness, Norway’s image as one of the most peaceful countries in the world will be questioned.

The second aspect of the Norwegian cultural identity, is Christianity. Christianity was used as a component of Norway’s cultural heritage and little focus was placed on the religious aspects it contains. Large focus was set on it as the source of *values* in society. It was the source for values because of the important place it holds in the cultural heritage of Norway. If you look at this through the perspective provided by cultural memory, Norwegians decided to “remember” their cultural heritage in Christianity. On the other side they “forget” the parts of Norse mythology and the Vikings that they believe did not fit with the modern Norwegian culture. Norse mythology was looked at as a competitive force in relation to Christianity and the influence it would have. In this case there was not room for both.

The strong reactions to attitudes and actions shown in this media debate, tied to the cultural identity components of peacefulness and Christianity demonstrate the complex nature of cultural identity formation. One of the quotes that I believe best demonstrates this was from Vårt Land September 29, 2010: “it is a big leap from giving a ship a Norse name, to screaming << to Valhall >> to a friend that is lying on a stretcher” (Lindekleiv, 2010, p. 6). This shows that from the military power structure standpoint the use of Norse and Viking references is okay when used superficially. When soldiers start to use it in other ways that are perceived as “deeper” they are reprimanded and told to stop. This was a double standard that appeared in various articles and shows why it was not too surprising that these soldiers turned to such references. When they were recruited into the Telemark battalion through materials which describe them as being the “the Norwegian Vikings of our time” (Haug, 2010, p. 6), it is in my opinion quite strange to then tell those same recruits to not act like Vikings or reference them in any way.

The relationship between the media and society was also central to this thesis. This relationship contains interactions that contributed to the reflection, creation, expansion, and evolution of a conceived Norwegian cultural identity. This relationship is one that is very complex and cannot be looked at as just a simple cause and effect interaction. This thesis has shown that it is a relationship that has many different dynamics at work. The media caused the Norwegian public to think about and discuss what kind of image they wanted to portray to the rest of the world, through the way the military conducted itself. It also contributed to Norwegians learning something about themselves and what values they want to defend and hold on to.

6.2 Reflections and Outlook

What role are professional soldiers going to play in the Norwegian Armed Forces and society? This was one of the main questions that emerged through this media debate and is something that Norwegian society needs to consider and debate even more. Norway has a desire to use their military for what can be called “peaceful purposes”, such as working as advisors and helping in the rebuilding process. This desire did not completely match up with the reality of NATO’s mission in Afghanistan. These same types of issues will continue to

emerge in instances when Norway is obliged to send soldiers on NATO missions. What kind of balance can be found between the desire to have “peaceful soldiers” and the reality of the obligations that come with the partnership in NATO and the mutual defense that this partnership provides?

The descriptions of the soldiers in the Telemark Battalion, Mek 4 Company displayed in the source material were based on generalizations and were mostly negative. This was also true of the image that was portrayed of one of their commanders, Rune Wenneberg. These soldiers are Norwegian citizens that sign up to do an extremely difficult job and receive little recognition in return from society. The actions of a few, as well as how the media portrayed these soldiers, caused an unfavorable picture of them to be presented to the public. This negative presentation is something that I believe they did not deserve. It is also important to remember that many of the statements from these soldiers were said in the stress of war. When one is in life or death situations they might express themselves differently than in their everyday life. This type of consideration is something that I believe was missing from the mediated picture that was presented by the press.

One of the positives that emerged through this media coverage and debate was a possible better understanding of the war in Afghanistan and the experiences of Norwegian soldiers, by the Norwegian civilian population. It was a war that Norway has been sending troops to since 2002, but that some say has not been sufficiently covered by the Norwegian press (Rønningen, 2010). Specifically concerning the missions and actions of Norwegian soldiers. The descriptions provided in the newspaper articles, the Alfa article, *Brothers in blood*, and the NRK documentary provided an expanded picture of what these soldiers are experiencing in Afghanistan. In the article that described Skavlan's interview with Wenneberg, Skavlan says “thank you for giving the war a face”¹⁶⁵ (Simonsen, 2010).¹⁶⁶ Eight years of Norwegian involvement in Afghanistan and it was finally “given a face”. This seems like quite a long time to finally acknowledge the work that was being done by these soldiers. It is important

¹⁶⁵ “Takk for at du ga krigen et ansikt”

¹⁶⁶ Skavlan is one of the most popular talk shows in Scandinavia. It is aired in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. The show consists of interviews with a variety of guests. It has around 3 million viewers per show (“About SKAVLAN”, n.d.).

that the civilian population is informed on what their military is involved in. This helps them to decide how they are going to vote for leaders and representatives, who will in turn decide how the military is used in foreign relations and in the international arena. The media therefore has an important role to play in helping provide the civilian population with information concerning their country's use of their armed forces.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

The "to Valhall" media debate brought forth a number of intriguing points and reactions. In this thesis I have analyzed a number of them and found that they were symptoms of something else that was lying beneath the surface. Beneath the surface was a desire to defend the foundational cultural components of peacefulness and Christian cultural heritage that are central to the Norwegian self-image. It also included questions surrounding what kind of role Norway is to play in the international arena, as well as what role Norwegian professional soldiers are to have.

Concerning the relationship between the media and society, this mediated debate displayed how the newspapers decide what kinds of stories they will print and what these stories will contain. Due to this, they hold a key role in directing how a societal debate plays out. At the same time, individuals themselves take the information that they consume from the media and use what works from them and interpret the content based on their worldview. They use this information in their society interactions as well as in their cultural identity formation. This combination was vital in bringing fourth the ideas that were "beneath the surface" in this "to Valhall" debate from 2010-2011. It provided society the opportunity to look at these events as well as themselves in diverse and complex ways.

7. References

- About ISAF: Mission.* (n.d.) Retrieved 11.03.14, from NATO Afghanistan ISAF Website, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/mission.html>.
- About NTB* (n.d.) Retrieved 05.02.14 from NTB Website, http://www.ntb.no/om_ntb.asp.
- About PRIO* (n.d.) Accessed 15.10.13 from Peace Research Institute Oslo, <http://www.prio.org/About/>.
- About SKAVLAN* (n.d.). Retrieved 23.01.14 from Skavlan website, <http://skavlan.com/en/about-skavlan1>.
- Altheide, D. L. & Schnedier, C. J. (2013). *Qualitative Media Analysis, Second Edition*. Los Angeles, California: Sage.
- Andersen, M. A., Ege, R. T., Hegvik, G. K., & Johansen, M. (2010, September 28) Slik Poserer Majoren. *VG*. p. 6. Retrieved 30.09.13 through Atekst.
- Andersen, M. A., Nilsen, O. N., Ege, R. T., Hegvik, G. K., & Johansen, M. (2010, September 30). Hedret soldat med vikingrop på graven. *VG*. Retrieved on 30.08.13 through Atekst.
- Andreassen, B. O. (2014, January 20). Christianity as culture and religions as religions. An analysis of the core curriculum as framework for Norwegian RE. *British Journal of Religious Education*. doi: 10.1080/01416200.2013.873388.
- Antall aviser etter type - resultat.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2014, from medianorge website, <http://medienorge.uib.no/statistikk/medium/avis/336>.
- Anwar, K. (2010, October 2) Til Valhall! *Aftenposten*. Accessed 09.04.13 through Atekst.
- Assmann, A. (2011) *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Assmann, J. (1995) Collective Memory and Cultural Identity, *New German Critique*, No. 65, *Cultural History/Cultural Studies* (Spring-Summer, 1995), pp. 125-133.
- Atekst.* (n.d) Retrieved 14.02.14 from Retriever website, <http://www.retriever-info.com/no/category/news-archive/>.
- Bamat, J. (2012, September 6). Are Norwegians better peace negotiators? *France 24*. Retrieved from <http://www.france24.com>.
- Barstad, H. (2011, November 12) Den skrivende soldat. *Nationen*. Retrieved 09.12.13 through Atekst.

- Bellah, R. N. (1967) Civil Religion in America. *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*. Winter 1967, Vol. 96, No. 1, pp. 1-21. Reprinted on <http://www.robertbellah.com>. Accessed 29.04.14.
- Bentzrød, S. B. (2011, November 9) -Det kan høres ut som en barnslig guttelek, men det var blodig alvor. *Aftenposten*. Retrieved 09.12.13.
- Berg, J. (2010, February 19) Usle Kryp i Afghanistan. *Morgenbladet*. Retrieved 28.08.13.
- Biography - LTC Pete Kilner, Ph.D.* (n.d.) Retrieved 05.04.14, from United States Army Combined Arms Center Website, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/AOKM/aokm2008/C1a1%20Doc1a%20AOKM%20Conference%202008%20Speakers%20Bio-Kilner.pdf>.
- Bredeveien, J. M. (2010a, October 1) En gang var vi krigere. *Morgenbladet*. Retrieved 16.01.14 through Atekst.
- (2010b, October 1) Streng omsorg. *Morgenbladet*. Retrieved 16.01.14 through Atekst.
- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Method 4th ed.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Busa, M. G. (2014). *Introducing the language of the news*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Calahan, P. D. (2002) *The Code of the Warrior, the Kinder, Gentler Military and Marksmanship: Changing a Culture*. USAWC Strategy Research Project. U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.
- Christiansen, P. (2010, September 29) Forsvaret vil luke ut krigsrusen. *Telemarksavisa*. Retrieved 28.08.13 through Atekst.
- CIA World Factbook: Norway* (n.d.). Retrieved October 30, 2013, from CIA World Factbook website, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/no.html>.
- Danielsen, T. A. (2014, January 6) Østre Porsgrunn kirke, hvem legger premissene for den nye kirken? *Telemarksavisa*. Accessed 10.02.14 through Atekst.
- Davidson, H. R. E. (1990). *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.
- Davie, G. (2006) Is Europe an Exceptional Case? *The Hedgehog Review*, Vol. 3, Nos. 1-2, 23-34.
- (2007) Vicarious Religion: A Methodological Challenge. In Ammerman, N. T. (Ed.), *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*. (pp. 21-36). Oxford Scholarship Online.

- Diesen, S. (2008, December 18) Den nye krigerkulturen. *Aftenposten*. Retrieved 30.01.14 through Atekst.
- Ducker, C. (2011) Believing in Grace Davie: what does she bring to an understanding of mission in Europe? *Encounters Mission Journal*. Issue 36 March 2011. Retrieved 18.11.13 from www.radcliffe.org/encounters.
- Døving, C.A. & Kraft, S.E. (2013) *Religion i pressen*. Oslo, Norge: Universitetsforlaget.
- Ege, R. T., Hegvik, G. K., Andersen, M. A., and Johansen, M. (2010a, September 28) Avviser nazi-koblinger i Telemark bataljon. *VG Nett*. Retrieved 27.08.13.
- (2010b, September 27) Dødninghoder. *VG*. p. 8. Retrieved 28.08.13 through Atekst.
- (2010c, September 27) Dødninghoder sprayet på afghanske hus. *VG Nett*. Retrieved 27.08.13.
- Eliassen, I. (2010, September 30) Amerikansk militær-etiker: Hevnlyst og drapsjubel << helt normalt >> i krig. *Stavanger Aftenblad*. Retrieved 28.08.13 through Atekst.
- Eriksen, T. H. (1993). Being Norwegian in a Shrinking World: Reflections on Norwegian Identity. In A.C. Kiel (Ed.), *Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Norway* (pp. 11-37). Oslo, Norway: Scandinavian University Press.
- (2010). *Norwegian Identity*. Retrieved 7 August 2013 from Bergen Guide website, <http://www.bergen-guide.com/406.htm>.
- Eriksen, T. H. and Neumann, I. B. (2011). Fra slektsgård til oljeplattform: Norsk identitet og Europa. *Internasjonal Politikk*, 69 (3), 413-436.
- Facts and Figures* (2013, November 20) Retrieved 01.10.13 from Norwegian Armed Forces Website, <http://mil.no/organisation/about/Factsandfigures/Pages/default.aspx>.
- Farmen*, (n.d.) Accessed 20.09.13 from [http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmen_\(Norge\)](http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmen_(Norge)).
- Feltprest*. (n.d.) In Store Norske Leksikon. Retrieved 03.05.14 from <http://snl.no/feltprest>.
- Feltprestkorpsset* (n.d.). Retrieved 6 January 2014, from Det Norske Kirke (The Norwegian Church) website, <http://www.kirken.no/?event=doLink&famID=124723>.
- Forsvarets overkommando FO (1998) *Forsvarets Verdigrunnlag*.
- Forsvarets overkommando (2000) *Forsvarets Verdigrunnlag*.
- (2003) *Forsvarets Verdigrunnlag*.

- Forsvaret (2011). *Forsvarets Verdigrunnlag*.
- Førstegongsteneste* (2014, February 24) Retrieved 08.05.14 from Norwegian Armed Forces Website, <http://forsvaret.no/verneplikt/kva-er-verneplikt/Sider/forstegongsteneste.aspx>.
- Gilbrant, J. M (2010a, October 8) Vi vinket og smilte til << Jokkes >> mordere: omstridt offiser. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 05.09.13 through Atekst.
- (2010b, September 28) Vil gå i krigen for Wenneberg Norske soldater i Afghanistan. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 29.08.13 through Atekst.
- Gilbrant, J. M. & Kvaale, V. K. (2010, September 28) Til Valhall! Norsk offiser hisser til kamp mot Taliban. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 29.08.13 through Atekst.
- Gilbrant, J. M., Kvaale, V.K., & Sandli, E. (2010, September 28) << Derer er rovdyret. Taliban er byttet. Til Valhall!>>. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 06.03.14 through Atekst.
- Goodhand, J., Klem, B., & Sorbo, G. (2011, December 11). Pawns of Peace: Evaluation of Norwegian Peace Efforts in Sri Lanka. Retrieved from Ground Views website, <http://groundviews.org/2011/11/12/pawns-of-peace-evaluation-of-norwegian-peace-efforts-in-sri-lanka/>.
- Gravdal, T. (2011, April 1-7) Generalens forsvar. *Morgenbladet*. Retrieved 11.09.13 through Atekst.
- Gray, J.G. (1998). *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Gripsrud, J. (2002). *Understanding Media Culture*. London, England: Arnold.
- Gritten, D. (2011, April 11). Armadillo: The horror! The horror! *The Telegraph*. Retrieved 18.10.13 from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film-news/8438291/Armadillo>.
- Gullestad, M. (2010) *Det Norske: sett med nye øyne*. Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget.
- (1989) *Kultur og hverdagsliv: På sporet av det moderne Norge*. Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget.
- Hanssen-Bauer, J. (2005, October) *The Norwegian "model" for conflict resolution*. Speech presented in Lisbon, Portugal. Retrieved 08.10.13 from http://www.ipri.pt/eventos/pdf/Jon%20Hanssen-Bauer_2005.pdf.
- Haug, K. (2010, September 29) Blir kalt << vår tids vikinger >>. *Klassekampen*. p. 6. Retrieved 30.08.13 through Atekst.

- Hauge, L. (2010, September 27). << Krige er bedre enn sex >> førte til VG-boikott. *NTB*. Retrieved 29.09.13 through Atekst.
- Hagesæther, A. P. (2010a) Forsvaret bør ikke indentifisere seg med krigerkulturen. in Løvland, T., Olsen, Ø. F., Rønne, J., Ravnaas, P., and Stordahl, T. E. (2010) *Kriger?. Forsvarets Forum*, Nr. 9 (September, 2010), pp. 30-39.
- (2010b) Norsk krigerkultur forankret i norrøn mytologi eller i naturretten?, *PACEM*, 13(1), 61-76.
- Halman, Loek (1994) Scandinavian Values: How Special are They? in Pettersson, T. & Riis, O. (1994) *Scandinavian Values*. Uppsala, Sweden: Psychologia et Sociologia Religionum 10.
- Hassan, I. (2010, October 15-21) Odin meg her og Odin meg der. *Morgenbladet*. Retrieved 05.09.13 through Atekst.
- Heller, A. (2001) Cultural Memory, Identity and Civil Society, *IPG 2/2001*. pp. 139-143. Retrieved from <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/ipg/ipg-2001-2/artheller.pdf>.
- Hersh, S. M. (2004, May 10) Torture at Abu Ghraib. *The New Yorker*. Accessed 05.02.14 from http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/10/040510fa_fact?currentPage=all.
- Hetland, T. (2011, January 14) Frå verneplikt til krigarkultur. *Stavanger Aftenblad*.
- History*, (n.d.) Accessed 15.10.13 from The Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights website, <http://www.oslocenter.no/en/about/history/>.
- Holbek, J. A. (2011, September 14) Kirkebrann utløste valgkamp. *Vårt Land*. Retrieved 10.02.14 through Atekst.
- Hustadnes, H. (2010, January 29) Fakta på vei ut - Norsk soldat drept. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 18.09.2013 through Atekst.
- Iversen, L.L. (2012) *Learning to be Norwegian: A case study of identity management in religious education in Norway*. Munster, Germany: Waxmann Verlag GmbH.
- Jacobsen, F. (2010, September 27) Misforstått krigerkultur. *VG*. Retrieved 23.01.14 through Atekst.
- Jakten på Kjærlighet: Bonderomatikk*, (n.d.) Accessed 20.09.13 from http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakten_på_kjærligheten.
- Johansen, E. (2012) *Brødre i blodet: I krig for Norge*. Oslo, Norway: Kagge Forlag.

- Jonassen, T. H. & Ottosen, P. (2011, April 4) I fjor: Utskjelte soldater hevdet at krig var bedre enn sex. I år: Fulgt av NRK-team Krigsdokumentar. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 09.11.13 through Atekst.
- Junger, S. (2010) *War*. New York, NY: Twelve.
- Kiel, A.C. (Ed.), *Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Norway* (pp. 11-37). Oslo, Norway: Scandinavian University Press.
- Kleppa, J. (2010, April 12). Norske soldater er påvirket av Black Metal. *DagenMagazinet*, p. 10. Retrieved 28 August 2013 through Atekst.
- Kleve, M. L. (2011, August 12) Vil skape Afghanistan-debatt litteratur. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 09.12.13 through Atekst.
- Kvaale V. K. & Gilbrant, J. M. (2010, September 28) Till Valhall! Norsk offiser hisser til kamp mot Taliban. *Dagbladet*.
- Kvarme, O.C.M. (2012) Kirken etter 22. juli - erfaringen med riter og ritualer *PACEM*, 15(2), 29-41.
- Leira, H. (ed.) (2007) *Norske selvbilder og norsk utenrikspolitikk*. Oslo, Norway: Norsk utenrikspolitisk Institutt.
- Lerum, M. G. (2011, November 27) Forsvarskrigerens forsvarstale. *VG*. Retrieved 09.12.13 through Atekst.
- Lerø, M. (2010, October 1) Ledelse i møte med ondskapen. *Ukeavisen Ledelse*. Retrieved 04.09.13 through Atekst.
- Levinas, E. (1999) *Totality and Infinity: an essay on exteriority*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press.
- Lindekleiv, H. M. (2011a, May 25) Feltprost: Vi er krigskorrektiv. *Vårt Land*. Retrieved 05.02.14 through Atekst.
- (2011b, May 25) Moderne forsvar - nye feltprester. *Vårt Land*. Retrieved 05.02.14 through Atekst.
- Lindekleiv, H.M. (2010, September 29) Ønsker forslag velkommen Soldater provoserer 'Forsvaret glemmer ondskapen', *Vårt Land*. Retrieved 28.08.13 through Atekst.
- Lombardo, Sebastiano. (2012, September 15) Østre Porsgrunn kirke. *Porsgrunns Dagblad*. Accessed 10.02.14 through Atekst.

- Lundby, K. (2010). Medier overalt. In I. Frønes and L. Kjølås (Eds.), *Den norske samfunn 6. utgave* (p. 347-370). Oslo, Norway: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS.
- Løvland, T., Olsen, Ø. F., Rønne, J., Ravnaas, P., and Stordahl, T. E. (2010) Kriger?. *Forsvarets Forum*, Nr. 9 (September, 2010), pp. 30-39.
- Machismo. (n.d.) In *Merriam Webster Online*, Retrieved 27.03.13, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/machismo>.
- Macnab, G. (2010, June 3). Armadillo: the Afghanistan war documentary that shocked Denmark. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 18.10.13 from <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/jun/03/armadillo-danish-documentary-afghanistan>.
- Matlary, J. H. (2008a, November 6) Jobb på liv og død. *Verdens gang*. Retrieved 27.01.14 through Atekst.
- (2008b, November 23) Kriger i kamuflasje? *VG*. Retrieved 23.01.14 through Atekst.
- Melgård, M. (2010, September 30) Forsvaret inviterte allierte til Vikingfest i Irak: Vikingkultur i forsvaret. *Dagbladet*. p.16. Retrieved 30.08.13 through Atekst.
- Nobel Peace Prize* (n.d.) Accessed 15.10.13 from the Nobel Peace Prize website, <http://nobelpeaceprize.org>.
- Nordli, K. (2010, October 15) Jeg vet at alt er mulig. *Aftenposten*. Retrieved 04.05.14.
- Norwegian Soldiers War Cry - Til Valhall*”, Uploaded 28.09.10, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5uQcU92x2o>. Accessed 06.03.14.
- Norwegian Soldiers War Cry in Afghanistan - “Til Valhall” (To Valhall)*, Uploaded 01.06.13, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qP9EaPa8dg>. Accessed 06.03.14.
- NRK - Arkeologene: Vikingen - superhelt og bonde*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://tv.nrk.no/serie/arkeologene/dktt46000511/sesong-1/episode-5>.
- NTB. (2010a, September 29) Soldater sparkes for dårlige holdninger. *DagenMagazinet*. Retrieved 30.01.14 through Atekst.
- (2010b, September 28) Tar avstand fra soldaters ukultur. *Agderposten*. Retrieved 16.01.14 through Atekst.
- NTBtekst. (2010, October 6) Nye verdier raskt på plass i Forsvaret. *NTB*. Retrieved 15.01.14 through Atekst.
- Nykvist, K. (2010, September 29). Hva var det vi ventet oss? *Nationen*. Retrieved on 30.01.14 through Atekst.

- Official Development Assistance - definition and coverage.* (n.d.) Retrieved 11.05.14 from the OECD website, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm>.
- Ofstad, S. (2010, October 6). Den nye soldatkulturen. *Klassekampen*. Retrieved 09.04.13 through Atekst.
- Olsen, D. T. (2009a, September) Har Hæren en krigerkultur? *Norges Forsvar*. Retrieved 15.01.14 from http://www.forsvarsforening.no/site/images/stories/sak_5_kriger_kultur.pdf.
- (2009b, April) Norge en snill frednasjon. *Norges Forsvar*. Retrieved 23.04.14 from http://www.forsvarsforening.no/site/images/stories/sak_4_fredsnasjon.pdf.
- Om Den norske kirke.* (n.d.) Retrieved 09.09.13 from the Den norske kirke website, <http://www.kirken.no/index.cfm?event=doLink&famId=232>.
- Oppdraget til de norske styrkene.* (2012, November 11). Retrieved 01.10.13 from Norwegian Armed Forces Website <http://forsvaret.no/operasjoner/internasjonalt/afghanistan/oppdraget/Sider/de-norske-styrkene.aspx>.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development: OECD.* (n.d.) Retrieved 11.03.14 from OECD Website, <http://www.oecd.org/development/stats/ODA2012.pdf>.
- Patriot. [n.d.] In *Bokmålsordboka*, Retrieved 23.04.14, from <http://www.nob-ordbok.uio.no/perl/ordbok.cgi?OPP=+patriot&begge=+&ordbok=begge>.
- Patriot [Def. 1]. (n.d.) In *Merriam Webster Online*, Retrieved 10.03.14, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patriot>.
- Population, 1 January 2014.* (2014, February 20). Retrieved 25.4.14, from Statistics Norway website, <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/folkemengde>.
- Punisher.* (n.d.) Retrieved 11.03.14 from Comic Vine Website, <http://www.comicvine.com/punisher/4005-1525/>.
- Punisher (Frank Castle)* (n.d.). Retrieved 23.10.13 from Marvel Comics Website, [http://marvel.com/universe/Punisher_\(Frank_Castle\)](http://marvel.com/universe/Punisher_(Frank_Castle))
- Rasch, J. S. (2011, April 13) Ny NRK-serie Forsvarer krigsspøk. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 09.11.13 through Atekst.
- Reinertsen, M. (2010, February 2) Krigere uten krig. *Morgenbladet*. Retrieved 28.08.13 through Atekst.

- Religious communities and life stance communities, 1 January 2013.* (2013) Retrieved from the Statistics Norway website, <http://ssb.no/en/kultur-og-fritid/statistikker/trosamf>.
- Repstad, P. (2010) Fra lov til lønnkammer?: Religion og livssyn i dagens Norge. In I. Frønes & L. Kjølørød (Ed.), *Det norske samfunn 6. utgave.* (pp. 371-392). Oslo, Norway: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Riise, T. (2008, December 4) << Skutt >> av forsvarsministeren. *VG*. Retrieved 09.12.13 through Atekst.
- Rønningen, M. S. (2010, October 1) *Norge i krig*. Alfa. Aller Media AS.
- Røislien, H.E. (2012) “There is no such thing as ‘Nice Soldiers’!” *Samtiden*, 2.
- Said, E. W. (2003) *Orientalism*. London, England: Penguin Books.
- Semmingsen, I. (2011, April 13) Tett på norske soldater i krig. *Dagsavisen*. Retrieved 09.11.13 through Atekst.
- Simonnes, H. (2010, September 28). Soldatmoral. *Vårt Land*. Retrieved 26.09.13 through Atekst.
- Simonsen, M. (2010, October 11) En vanlig dag i krigen, *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 08.01.14 through Atekst.
- Spivak, G. C. (1985) Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (pp. 271-313). Basingstoke, England: MacMillan.
- Steinsland, G. (2005). *Norrøn religion*. Oslo, Norway: Pax Forlag A/S.
- Strøm-Erichsen, A. G. (2008a, November 17) Norsk kriginnsats. *VG*. Retrieved 23.01.14 through Atekst.
- (2008b, November 27) Vi feirer ikke. *VG*. Retrieved 23.01.14 through Atekst.
- Stueland, E. (2011, December 3) Mellom soldater og sivile. *Klassekampen*. Retrieved 09.12.13 through Atekst.
- Sverre Diesen*. (n.d.) In Store Norske Leksikon. Retrieved 11.05.14 from http://snl.no/Sverre_Diesen.
- Sæther, J. M. (2010a, December 24) Fra krig til julefred. *Dagsavisen*. Retrieved 09.09.13 through Atekst.
- (2010b, May 8) Åpnes kun ved død. *Dagsavisen*. Accessed 09.09.13 through Atekst.

- Sæveraas, T. E. (2010, October 16) Brothers in Arms. *Klassekampen*. Retrieved 05.09.10 through Atekst.
- Sævik, T. H. (2010, April 13) Forsvaret har ingen norrøne preferanser. *DagenMagazinet*. Retrieved 28.08.13 through Atekst.
- Sødal, H. J. & Eidhamar, L. G. (2005). Religion in Norway: A Bird's-Eye View. In E. Maagerø & B. Simonsen (Eds.), *Norway: Society and Culture* (pp. 41-58). Kristiansand: Portal Books.
- Telemark bataljon* (2012, October 3). Retrieved 01.10.13 from Norwegian Armed Forces Website, <http://forsvaret.no/utdanning-karriere/spesielle-tjenester/telemark-bataljon/Sider/Telemark-bataljon.aspx>.
- The Constitution - Complete text* (7 October 2013). Retrieved November 12, 2013, from Stortinget website, <http://www.stortinget.no/In-English/About-the-Storting/The-Constitution/The-Constitution/>.
- Thoresen, L. (2011, October 7) Røverhistorier fra krigen. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 09.13.11 through Atekst.
- "*Til Valhall*", Uploaded 28.09.10, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxOSqSUGNzE>. Accessed 17.02.14.
- Til Valhall - Norwegian Soldiers Battle Cry*, Uploaded 05.05.11, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYy7a8Fhb1w>. Accessed 06.03.14.
- Townsend, J. (2011, August 4). Branding Peace: Norway's Identity Put to the Test. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from <http://huffingtonpost.com>.
- TV-aksjonen*. (n.d.) Accessed 11.03.14 from NRK Website, <http://www.nrk.no/tvaksjonen/>.
- Tvedt, T. (2010). Det nasjonale godhetsregimet: Om utviklingshjelp, fredspolitik og det norske samfunn. In I. Frønes & L. Kjølørød (Ed.), *Det norske samfunn 6. utgave* (pp. 479-502). Oslo, Norway: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Ulriksen, S. (2002) *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen: Militærmakt eller folkeforsvar*. Oslo, Norway: Pax Forlag, A/S.
- Versto, O. (2009, May 18) Norge i krig. *VG*. Retrieved 01.16.14 through Atekst.
- Weihe, H. J. W. & Smith-Solbakken, M. (2010, October 1). Krig, sex, språk og verdier. *Stavanger Aftenblad*. Retrieved 16.01.14 through Atekst.
- Why Norway?* (n.d.) Retrieved 08.10.13, from the Nobel Peace Prize website, http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en_GB/about_peaceprize/why-norway/.

Wiese, A. (2011, November 9) En norsk kriger Emil Johansen. *Dagbladet*. Retrieved 09.12.13 through Atekst.

Wålberg, K. I. (2010, January 12) Ønsker statsråd-hjelp til Kirkebrann saken. *Glåmdalen*. Retrieved 10.02.14 through Atekst.

Ydstebø, P. (2009). Kriger eller soldat? Strategiens krav til den militære profesjon. In H. Edström, N. T. Lunde, & J. H. Matlary (Eds.), *Krigerkultur i en fredsnasjon*. Oslo, Norway: Abstrakt forlag.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A

VOG

Nr. 265
Tirsdag
28. september
2010
Uke 39
Kr. 12,00

Stor bilguide:

NORSK MAJOR I AFGHANISTAN

LUKSUS til under 300 000

● SIDE 24 og 25

«TIL VALHALL!»
Major Rune Wenneberg poserer med vikinghjelm og dødningskalle, og har innført kampropet «Til Valhall!».

Fordømmes for VIKING-ADFERD

7 052960 808472

● SIDE 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 og 10

8.2 Appendix B



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Telemark_battalion_insignia.jpg

8.3 Appendix C



<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/afghanistan/hedret-soldat-med-vikingrop-paa-graven/a/10033405/>

8.4 Appendix D



<http://www.comicvine.com/forums/battles-7/batman-vs-punisher-418009/>

8.5 Appendix E

VG sammenligner SAS-Norwegian: **SAS**

SÅ GAMLE ER FLYENE ● SIDE 12

VG Nr. 264 Mandag 27. september 2010 Uke 39 Kr. 12,00

Moa på sykehus:

HJEM etter lege-sjekk ● SPORTEM

Norske soldater om å drepe i Afghanistan:

Krige er bedre enn sex

Krisemøter i Forsvaret om ukultur ● SIDE 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 og 11

7 052960 808472

Foto: JAN OVIND

Foto: ANDREA GJESVINGE

Foto: FORSVARET

<http://proxy.mf.no:2108/services/archive/displayPDF?documentId=0550162010092739904626&serviceId=2>